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Vietnam Movies: The Road to Rambo III

ROBERT KUTTNER ON DUKAKONOMICS • THE EDITORS ON VEEP CHOICES

HOW TO FIX THE PENTAGON

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The Shot Heard Round The World

What they thought about our revolution

by Henry Fairlie

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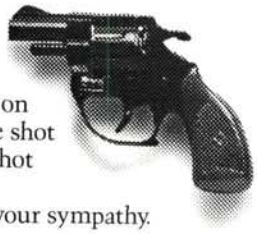
–Mrs. James S. Brady–

"A $29 handgun shattered my family's life."



"Seven years ago, John Hinckley pulled a $29 revolver from his pocket and opened fire on a Washington street. He shot the President. He also shot my husband.

I'm not asking for your sympathy. I'm asking for your help.

I've learned from my own experience that, alone, there's only so much you can do to stop handgun violence. But that together, we can confront the mightiest gun lobby–the N.R.A.–and win.

I've only to look at my husband Jim to remember that awful day...the unending TV coverage of the handgun firing over and over... the nightmare panic and fear.

It's an absolute miracle nobody was killed. After all, twenty thousand Americans are killed by handguns every year. Thousands more–men, women, even children–are maimed for life.

Like me, I know you support *stronger* handgun control laws. So does the vast majority of Americans. But the National Rifle Association can spend so much in elections that Congress is afraid to pass an effective national handgun law.

It's time to change that. Before it's too late for another family like mine... a family like yours.

I joined Handgun Control, Inc. because they're willing to take on the N.R.A. Right now we're campaigning for a national waiting period and background check on handgun purchases.

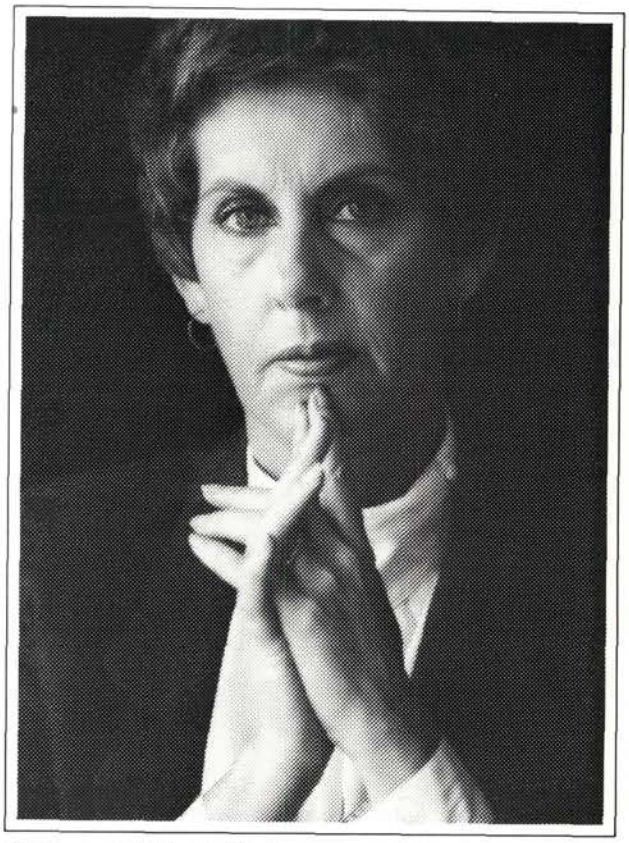
If such simple, basic measures had been on the books seven years ago, John Hinckley would never have walked out of that Texas pawnshop with the handgun which came within an inch of killing Ronald Reagan. He lied on his purchase application. Given time, the police could have caught the lie and put him in jail.

Of course, John Hinckley's not the only one. Police report that thousands of known criminals buy handguns right over the counter in this country. We have to stop them.

So, please, pick up a pen. Write me to find out how you can help. And support our work with a generous contribution.

It's time we kept handguns out of the wrong hands. It's time to break the National Rifle Association's grip on Congress and start making our cities and neighborhoods safe again.

Thank you and God bless you."



"Don't let it happen to you."

Dear Sarah,

It's time to break the N.R.A.'s grip on Congress once and for all. Here's my contribution to Handgun Control, Inc., the million-strong nonprofit citizens' group you help direct:

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

THEY ASKED FOR IT

There's just no pleasing some people. For the past few years it was hard to turn on the TV news without encountering some farmer bitching and moaning to a sympathetic, nodding correspondent about the parlous state of American agriculture. The problem? Oversupply of farm products. It was lowering prices, depressing land values, driving him out of business, destroying a way of life, etc. etc. etc. The solution? More government help, of course.

Iowa Senator Tom Harkin, the farmers' most vocal tribune in Washington, wrote only a few months ago: "Debt and despair, foreclosures and even suicides have swept across the heartland in recent years, turning entire regions into economic wastelands. . . . The farm crisis today, simply put, is a case of having too much grain with nowhere to go."

Now you turn on the tube and there's that same farmer, or someone just like him, still moaning—this time about the drought, the principal effect of which has been to solve the oversupply problem rather effectively. The drought is ruining his crops, driving him out of business, destroying a way of life, etc. etc. etc. The solution? You guessed it. Interviewed by the Council Bluffs, Iowa, *Nonpareil*, Senator Harkin accused the Agriculture Department of "moving too slowly to deal with drought-stricken grain and livestock farmers" and said that "if anything should be learned from the drought situation, it is that the current administration's policy of 'laissez-faire free market' isn't working."

It would be a lot easier to sympathize with farmers in their current plight if they weren't so clearly victims of that old Chinese curse: may your dreams come true. For the drought is God's way of enacting the farmers' chosen instrument for their own salvation: the Harkin-Gephardt "Family Farm Act," intended to raise farm prices by reducing food production. The Harkin-Gephardt bill was designed to achieve this objective through mandatory production limits—in other words, a government-supervised food cartel. The drought has worked the same magic—reduced supply, increased price—without all the bureaucratic complications.

Two years ago Congress mandated a poll of wheat farmers to test their enthusiasm for production controls. A majority said they would favor a law requiring them to cut their production by half, with the expected result that wheat prices would nearly double from $2.19 to $4.15 a bushel. As of the end of June, the drought had destroyed about half the wheat crop of the northern Great Plains, or about a quarter of the nation's total expected harvest for 1988. Prices had duly shot up from the Agriculture Department's predicted $2.70 a bushel to over four dollars. Yet the farmers seem oddly dissatisfied.

Of course, the rain fails to fall on the just and the unjust alike. The drought comes without the Harkin-Gephardt bill's elaborate quota formulas to ensure that the burden of reduced production is shared as equally as the benefit of the increased price. But surely this is a problem the hardy yeomen can work out among themselves, without demanding yet more assistance from non-farmers.

After all, "laissez-faire free market" is hardly an accurate description of the Reagan administration's farm policy. The cost of direct government subsidy payments to farmers has been running at well over $20 billion a year (compared with a pre-Reagan record high of $5.6 billion in 1978). The trick of the "Family Farm Act" would be to transfer the cost of subsidizing farmers from people's tax bills to their food bills, where it is less noticeable. Production controls would eliminate the need for expensive government price support and income maintenance programs.

Here, too, the drought is working exactly the same way. As prices climb, the government's standing offers to buy various crops at a certain price, or to make up the difference between the market price and some higher "target" price, become much less costly. The drought may cut farm program costs as much as $5 billion this year. Meanwhile, consumer food prices will rise only two percent or so. A good deal? Even a cloudless

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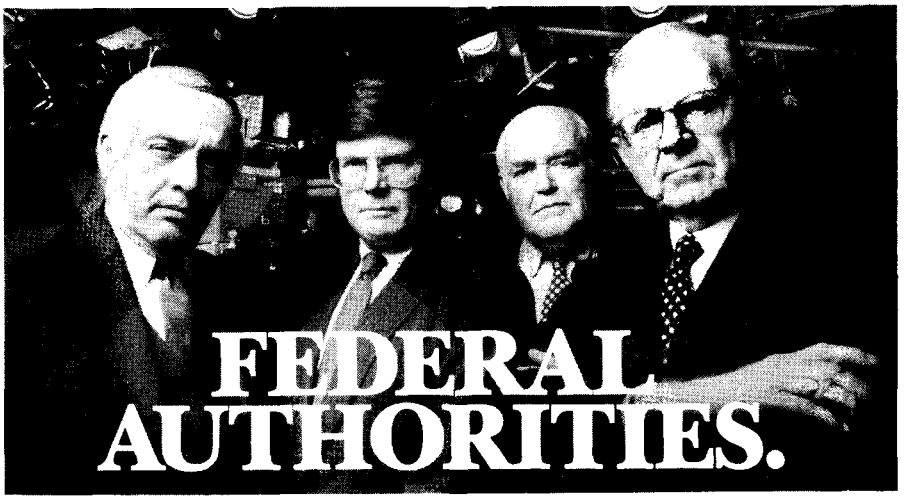

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CORRESPONDENCE

LEGAL DOSAGE

To the editors:

In his critique of the case for legalizing drugs, Morton M. Kondracke says that 70 percent of cocaine users become addicted ("Don't Legalize Drugs," June 27). None of the studies sponsored by the National Institute on Drug Abuse supports such an estimate. Kondracke's speculations on the numbers of drug users under a legalization regime rely heavily on the wild estimates provided by Drs. DuPont and McDonald. No evidence supports the assumption that if drugs are legalized 50 to 60 million Americans will use cocaine, 8.5 to 42 million will become cocaine addicts, and ten million will use heroin. This makes sense only if one assumes that Americans are basically the same as rats and monkeys when it comes to drug-taking. I assume that most Americans are basically rational, that most who do not now use alcohol or tobacco are unlikely to use the illicit drugs even if they are legalized, and that most who already use alcohol responsibly will not suddenly become addicts or reckless drug abusers.

One benefit of legalization that Kondracke confuses for a cost is the effect on drug abusers and addicts who have not been deterred by the criminal laws. Most of these Americans are worse off because the substances are illegal—they can be arrested, harassed, or fired even if their drug use has no effect on their job performance—and are not regulated. With legalization, one almost certainly would find fewer heroin "overdose" deaths, fewer cases of AIDS being transmitted by i.v. drug users, and more effective, humane drug treatment programs.

Kondracke's analysis suggests that he would have opposed the repeal of Prohibition. If drug legalization makes sense today, it is for the same reasons that we resist criminalizing alcohol and tobacco. This country does not have endless resources to devote to vice law enforcement. Our courts and prisons are clogged with drug law violators while thieves, extortionists, and others receive far less punishment than is due them. A more effective and ethical public policy would focus on the types of crimes from which people cannot walk away.

Kondracke calls for increased penalties to discourage drug use and claims that such measures are parallel to the way society is dealing with drunk driving and cigarette smoking. He loses sight, however, of a basic distinction: we do not imprison those who produce, sell, or use tobacco or alcohol unless they put others at direct risk. Yet our current drug policies rely first and foremost upon the criminal sanction. The vast majority of illicit drug users do no direct harm to anyone, and relatively little harm even to themselves. Public policies that try to address the drug abuse problem by criminalizing the behavior of tens of millions are immoral.

Legalization of drugs represents a scary and risky option, but it offers far too many advantages to be dismissed out of hand. For those so interested, I recommend reading my forthcoming piece in the Summer issue of the *Public Interest*.

ETHAN NADELMANN
Princeton, New Jersey

To the editors:

Morton Kondracke's opposition to drug legalization uses our current liquor and tobacco policy as a model. Decriminalizing drugs to an "undesirable substance" classification with no advertising or promotional programs permitted would not be a copy of our liquor and tobacco policy. By including alcohol and tobacco in the same category and eliminating their advertising, we would have a consistent policy on drugs not present today. We would also have a sum total drop in ill health effects even if drug use increased.

GORDON W. EATON
Worton, Maryland

FOSTERING PREJUDICES

To the editors:

In the Washington Diarist, Richard Blow defends Michael Dukakis's position that gay men and lesbians should be passed over as potential foster parents because children placed with them would be subject to ridicule and hostility ("Pipe Dreams," June 6). An analogous argument was considered and rejected by the Supreme Court in 1984 in the case of *Palmore* v. *Sidoti*. In that case, a state court had divested a mother of custody of her infant child because she had remarried a

continued on page 42

The American Dream in Reverse

The expectation of having more tomorrow than we have today has for generations defined what it means to be American. It was called upward mobility. Yet today, one in five American workers is being forced *down* the mobility ladder, earning less and experiencing a serious loss of status and self-respect.

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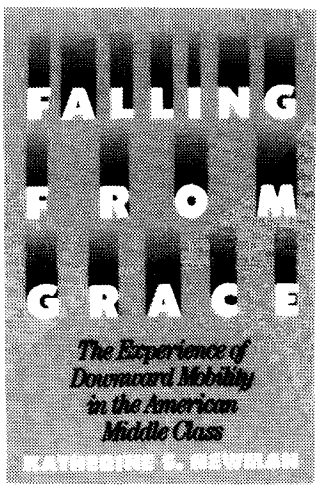

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
JULY 18 & 25, 1988

KEEPING THE PENTAGON HONEST

The Pentagon procurement scandal has come just in time. It will nicely fill the publicity vacuum left by the exhaustion of Congress's "war on drugs" rhetoric. Senators and representatives are already talking about holding procurement hearings, and some are dusting off reform ideas that long predate the current scandal and, in some cases, have little to do with it. There are proposals to curb the Pentagon's use of consultants, even though it was the *contractors'* consultants who allegedly bought classified information. There are proposals to make contract bidding more competitive, even though stiff competition is exactly what encouraged arms makers to play dirty. And some observers, in recognition of this fact, want to make the system *less* competitive.

Let's not get carried away. Since even well-intended regulations have a way of making things at once worse and more expensive, we shouldn't rush to tamper fundamentally with the procurement process. If Congress can summon some self-control in an election year, hearings might be pushed back until, say, someone has actually been accused of a crime. To occupy air time in the meanwhile, there are a few reforms that stop short of overhauling military procurement but would strongly discourage repeat performances of Pentagate or Spentagon, or whatever you want to call it.

1. Strike fear into the heart of the military-industrial complex. What the Pentagon needs is institutionalized ABSCAM: a perennial sting operation that uncovers wrongdoing by promising to reward it. A phony consultant can take bureaucrats out to lunch until he finds one who casually mentions that information costs money. A phony defense contractor can ferret out consultants who offer purloined papers, thus killing two birds with one sting. Nothing keeps a procurement officer honest quite like the knowledge that anyone willing to bribe him stands a one-in-ten chance of being wired for sound.

2. Keep investigators insulated from the Pentagon. Representative Barbara Boxer and Representative Charles E. Bennett have proposed making the Pentagon's inspector general independent of Defense Department oversight. This makes sense; deep down, no secretary of defense wants to see a scandal surface. Just look at Caspar Weinberger, on whose watch this one got started. Last summer, after William F. Weld, then assistant attorney general, testified before a House subcommittee about the incestuous relationship between Pentagon officials and defense contractors, Weinberger wrote Weld's boss, Ed Meese, "I am sure you will agree, Ed, that our departments should not try to point fingers and lay blame on each other as Assistant Attorney General Weld's statement appears to do, particularly in a public forum." It never occurred to Weinberger, apparently, that asking the Justice Department not to "point fingers" is like asking the Defense Department not to point guns.

3. Clean up the culture of corruption. Scandals usually start innocently enough. A mid-level procurement-bureaucracy functionary—say, a Navy captain (or the civilian equivalent)—retires. Captain X goes to work for a defense con-

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tractor, or as a consultant to defense contractors. After settling in, he invites his Pentagon replacement to lunch. The lunch is bound to be convivial. Not only are these men comrades in arms; they're probably old friends, since Captain X hand-picked his successor. Besides, the successor is already thinking about post-retirement employment, so he's inclined to stay on good terms with people who have made the jump to the private sector. After a little reminiscing and a few beers, talk turns to contracting. Such conversations may eventually lead to out and out bribery. But even if they don't, inside information can come to light (regarding future Pentagon plans, or bids submitted by competitors) and influence can be brought to bear. Either way, the upshot is the awarding of contracts on some basis other than pure merit—which means wasted tax dollars.

Once you move from mid-level career public servants to high-level political appointees, the plot thickens. These people not only head for the defense industry upon leaving government; they've often come from an arms maker in the first place, and see brief public service mainly as a way to inflate their private-sector market value. The emerging star of the current show, Melvin R. Paisley, went from Boeing to the Navy, where he became assistant Navy secretary and a top acquisitions official. (Boeing gave him a forget-me-not: $183,000 in severance pay.) At the Pentagon, Paisley helped redesign the procurement process in a way that placed him at its center. (In fairness, the new system seems to have gotten some weapons built fairly fast and cheap.) So upon leaving in 1987, he was (*a*) one of the few people who understood exactly how the system worked and (*b*) acquainted with almost everyone involved in it, whether in the Pentagon or on Capitol Hill. Naturally, Paisley became a consultant. Then he became what he is today: a subject of intense interest to the FBI.

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	SOME LIKE IT HOT	2	2
2.	SCORCHED EARTH	*	2
3.	GENERAL DYNAMICS	1	2
4.	ACTS OF CONGRESS	—	1
5.	TRUMP'S CARD	—	1
6.	HOUSE OF WHACKS	*	3
7.	HUSBANDING AN IMAGE	5	3
8.	PLANE AND FANCIES	—	1
9.	LONG DAY'S JOURNEY	—	1
10.	PLEASE STAND BY	—	1

1. SOME LIKE IT HOT

Drought. Enough rain-dancing, how much is this drought going to take out of your wallet? Drought reports have become essentially economic, with hints of gougers trying to corner the market as commodities prices rise. Ahead: human interest pieces about global grain shortages—especially in Africa, where ongoing droughts get virtually no attention.

2. SCORCHED EARTH

Greenhouse effect. Speculation about a greenhoused Earth has spun off a number of related environmental angles, but in the absence of a forceful Cassandra it's pretty pro forma. What's taking Cassandra so long? In the meantime, some conservative (Donald Hodel?) is missing a bet. You know what reflects solar heat back into space? Atmospheric pollution.

3. GENERAL DYNAMICS

Pentagon. Amid all the speculation about who did what when, and who wasn't watching, it's the Big Picture pieces that stand out. Even friends of the Pentagon note that the manner in which the U.S. arms itself is zillion-dollar corporate welfare, and that the middlemen buying defense secrets fill a communications gap.

4. ACTS OF CONGRESS

Soviet Party Congress. Has anyone ever enjoyed the kind of Western press Gorbo has gotten in advance of the Party Congress? He is a man not merely against a sluggish Party bureaucracy, he stands athwart Communism, athwart History itself. The Saint is a role the media rarely cast, and rarely for long. So when's the backlash coming?

5. TRUMP'S CARD

Spinks-Tyson. Lots of hype, lots of money, lots of magazine covers, no fight. Still, how many people knew or cared anything about the boxers? Or about boxing? The hype to the contrary, interest in boxing per se seems quite limited; the feminized middle and upper classes are repelled by it. Conceivably, Tyson could transcend this, but he's got nobody but palookas to fight now.

6. HOUSE OF WHACKS

Wright. This probably wasn't what Newt Gingrich was after, but the Wright story has headed in an unsurprising direction: the whole House is stewing in ill-begotten, though not-quite-illegal cash. Not only is this story an overfamiliar Washington chestnut, it is, in news terms, meaningless. Corruption plays best when it's partisan. Otherwise, nobody's pushing it.

7. HUSBANDING AN IMAGE

The race. This first-husband joke about Bush that people laugh at without understanding is important; it indicates that people are primed to guffaw at Bush, that he's become a comic figure. Politically, this is usually fatal because there's no known way to unmake such a persona. Ask blue-collar Reagan Democrats. Ask women. Hell, ask Tom Dewey.

8. PLANE AND FANCIES

Airbus. Concerns about flying weren't the only reason the airbus story got such big play. At least as important was the availability of Splatter News footage. What made the story, when it broke, was computer hatred, the current Luddism. Reports played off the notion that the airbus was controlled by an ancestor of HAL, and that one shouldn't trust these things.

9. LONG DAY'S JOURNEY

The sun. The relationship with the sun this summer is approaching the adversarial. The minimum SPF for sensible people is purportedly 15, while young children supposedly should stay in the shade. Even sunglasses are now judged by their protective qualities. Between sex and nature, is fear embedding itself as a basic Western outlook?

10. PLEASE STAND BY

Writers' strike. The writers' strike is now "imperiling" the networks' fall TV season. Thing is, the networks' fall TV season doesn't much matter. Network audiences have fallen, and even many habitual viewers approach their sets with rock-bottom expectations. Disrupted network production would once have been a major culture event. No more.

*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

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In reaction to these sorts of anecdotes, some on Capitol Hill are proposing to tighten revolving-door laws, which constrain movement between public and private sector. Paisley, even if he turns out to be guilty, isn't an object lesson in the need for such reform; he left government a few weeks before the latest of these laws took hold. Still, the reformers are right: the laws are almost uselessly loose. They'll keep a future Paisley from working for a company (for two years after leaving the Pentagon) only if he's been the government's "primary" representative in dealing with it on a contract worth $10 million or more. As for mid-level bureaucrats—the Captain Xs—they're only kept from serving a contractor in the hereafter if they've spent most of their final two years in government working with it.

These rules prevent only the most explicit quid pro quos. They leave intact the decades-old tradition of staffing private contractors, and their consultants, with recent government workers who have close friends in the Pentagon—friends who may need their help, whether direct or indirect, when retirement rolls around. A bill sponsored by Boxer and Bennett would tighten the rules somewhat, prohibiting officials from working (for two years) for a company they've had "personal" and "substantial" dealings with in a "decision-making" capacity. These restrictions probably aren't strong enough, but they'll do as a debate starter.

The whining will come from two sources. First, defense contractors will complain that tough revolving-door laws deprive them of critical information about the procurement labyrinth. But if the information they want is really aboveboard, then it's accessible through official channels and through bitter experience in dealing with the bureaucracy—which means it's possible to become a good consultant without doing time in the Pentagon. Second, Captain Xs and Paisleys alike will complain that this reform lowers their lifetime earnings. So what? How tragic would it be if public servants were motivated by a desire to serve the public? Granted, we don't want to keep qualified and honorable executives out of government service by keeping them from using their hard-earned expertise in the future. Unfortunately, it's hard to come up with rules that prevent ex-officials from peddling influence while permitting them to peddle their expertise. You have to err on one side or the other. The latest evidence is that we've been erring on the other.

Pick One Of Three

Governor Dukakis has no reason to heed TNR's counsel about his choice of a vice presidential running mate. We were not among his supporters during the primary. Early in the preliminary skirmishes, we carried articles urging the candidacies of Georgia Senator Sam Nunn and New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley. And just before Super Tuesday, we endorsed Senator Al Gore.

Without our help or advice, Dukakis ran a dignified, skillful, and, more important, winning campaign. And the polls now show him running far ahead of George Bush. But the most recent poll, by Gallup for Times-Mirror, indicates that lead is mostly a function of Bush negatives, not yet of Dukakis positives. So his vice presidential choice remains important for his electoral chances, not to mention for the country if he is elected. Dukakis has put the preliminary search in the capable hands of Paul Brountas, a respected and meticulous Boston attorney who was his classmate at Harvard Law School. This reflects a positive trait of Dukakis-style politics: he doesn't do important things sloppily. With Dukakis and Brountas there is no chance that the ticket will be put together the way it was in 1972, when George McGovern stumbled onto his running mate disaster, Tom Eagleton, or in 1984, when a cynically calculated but paradoxically helter-skelter process produced a Geraldine Ferraro for the hapless Fritz Mondale.

Over on the Republican side, current speculation has it that, despite their primary campaign rancor, George Bush may ask Robert Dole to be his partner. Besides his political assets, Dole would be helpful to a President Bush in shepherding a Republican legislative agenda through Congress. Mike Dukakis, whose experience as governor has taught him about the perils of dealing with a cantankerous legislature, should also be asking himself who among the Democrats he is now contemplating is schooled enough in the arcane ways of the House and the Senate to help him enact the problematic program that would be any Democrat's destiny.

One piece of advice we're tempted to give Dukakis apparently would be superfluous: there seems no danger he will go left for his vice president. In this, his thinking is sound both for getting elected and for governing. We trust it's strong enough to protect him from an emotional wave for Jesse Jackson on the convention floor. To win in November the Democratic Party must retrieve the millions of voters it has been losing for nearly a generation. These are predominantly white working- and middle-class males, concentrated in the South, the West, and urban ethnic areas of the industrial states. When pitted in the primaries against candidates other than Jackson, Dukakis did not evoke great support from these groups. If the Great Mentioner is right in his informed speculations, Dukakis understands he can use some help in these quarters.

Three of the candidates widely rumored as being under consideration seem to us to meet only the barest formal

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requirements of coming from the more moderate wing of the party or from the South.

Senator Bob Graham of Florida has served in the Capitol for scarcely a year and a half, so he cannot realistically claim much Washington experience to balance Dukakis's outsider appeal. It's not even clear that he'd help to carry Florida, of which he was governor. There is no Florida "miracle" to conjure up. Graham would lend neither distinction nor energy to the ticket—nor any special vision or ability to the office. He seems more affable than Dukakis. That's not enough.

The prospect of Senator Lloyd Bentsen of Texas just one heartbeat away is disheartening. If it is meant to satisfy the Ur-conservatives in the party, it is giving them more than they need or deserve. Bentsen is an ordinary Texas oil-patch politician favorite of the permanent Washington fixer community, as comfortable with Republicans in power as with Democrats. He will not draw the disaffected but only console big business, which will never provide many Democratic voters. Bentsen is probably a Democrat only because he is a Texan of a certain age. Still, he might well fail to take Texas away from that semi-Texan who is the Republican presidential nominee.

Senator John Glenn of Ohio is an early hero in the exploration of space. But when he tried for the presidency himself in 1984, spending money hand over fist, he hardly made a ripple (and he has still got a multimillion-dollar debt from that campaign). His heroism apparently does not communicate politically. Does anyone remember his keynote address to the Democratic convention in 1976? Glenn is a drone. He's been in the Senate since 1975 but has had virtually no impact on any major political issue. In fact, Glenn is one of the most legendarily inactive senators around. He is known for his integrity, to be sure. But that is not enough. There's a sense, and not just among nasty people, that Glenn is a little thick, that the vagueness of his expression reflects the vagueness of his mind. It is this obtuseness that evokes unflattering comparisons with George Bush.

OF THE other public figures who've been interviewed by Dukakis and/or Brountas, there are three who in our view would make excellent vice presidential candidates. And they'd be terrific in helping President Dukakis clear the legislative mine fields of the future. Not surprisingly, they are the same three we urged on our readers over the past couple of years: Bill Bradley, Sam Nunn, and Al Gore. They have much in common besides being senators. Along with Pat Moynihan, they are the Senate's leading intellectuals and long-range thinkers. They are also defense Democrats and foreign policy specialists. Bradley's focus is somewhat different than Nunn's and Gore's. But any one of them would add depth to the ticket (and to an administration) in areas where Dukakis is widely seen to be lacking.

These three Democrats all have a certified appeal to the voters Dukakis needs to attract. It is not that they are right-wing Democrats, or big-oil Democrats like Bentsen. Quite the contrary. What they have demonstrated is a characterological skepticism about liberal bromides. This skepticism, an expression of their sense of the fragility of the social fabric, is what can reassure those lost Democratic voters that the party is not inevitably the party of reckless change.

Bill Bradley apparently has declined to be considered for the vice presidency. His reticence, which many admire, may actually be his least attractive trait. It's hard to reconcile Bradley's commitment to public service with a refusal to run if he were actually to be asked to run, for the sake of the party and of the country. He is not from the South, but as a sports hero is better positioned than Dukakis to appeal to Southerners and other Middle Americans. Geography apart, Bradley and Dukakis would be an exemplary pairing. With the 1986 Tax Reform Act, this temperamentally moderate man has on his record the achievement of a long-deferred liberal goal. (On many issues more moderate tribunes can achieve liberal purposes than the Ted Kennedys do.) Bradley's sometime support for aid to the Nicaraguan *contras* might stick in the craw of the party's left. But this year all but the most intransigent members of that faction seem to prefer, for once, a victorious great Democratic coalition to a purer but defeated Democratic self-enclosure.

Sam Nunn presents the party with a similar predicament. But he, too, has saved the day for the liberals more than once. It was Nunn, and not Alan Cranston, who defeated by masterful refutation the administration's effort to rewrite the historical meaning of the ABM Treaty to make room for Star Wars. A Nunn vice presidential candidacy would signal the voters that the Democrats see their party as the embodiment not of a monolithic doctrine but of a set of humane values. These values have led Nunn to propose a National Service program dealing with the homeless, the mentally ill, the illiteracy of high school dropouts, and conservation efforts in local communities. And Nunn—criticism to the contrary notwithstanding—has been a reliable supporter of important civil rights legislation. He would give Dukakis a shot at the South.

Contrast the iffiness of Graham helping to carry Florida or Bentsen winning Texas with the near certainty that Al Gore would put the megastate of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Arkansas into the Democratic column. Almost by himself, also, he makes North Carolina and Georgia more than likely for the Dukakis ticket. And Gore's presence would prevent the Republicans from taking the Deep South states of Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana plus Oklahoma for granted. The 49 congressional districts he won on Super Tuesday in the Southern and border states (compared with the three districts Dukakis won outside Maryland, Florida, and Texas) are the homes of the indispensable swing voters who twice cast their ballots for Reagan. Despite the churlishness of some of their encounters during the primaries, Dukakis and Gore are remarkably complementary individuals—intellectually able, morally serious, politically astute. Gore would bring to the electoral effort a reassuring mastery of defense issues. He would bring to the vice presidency a dozen years

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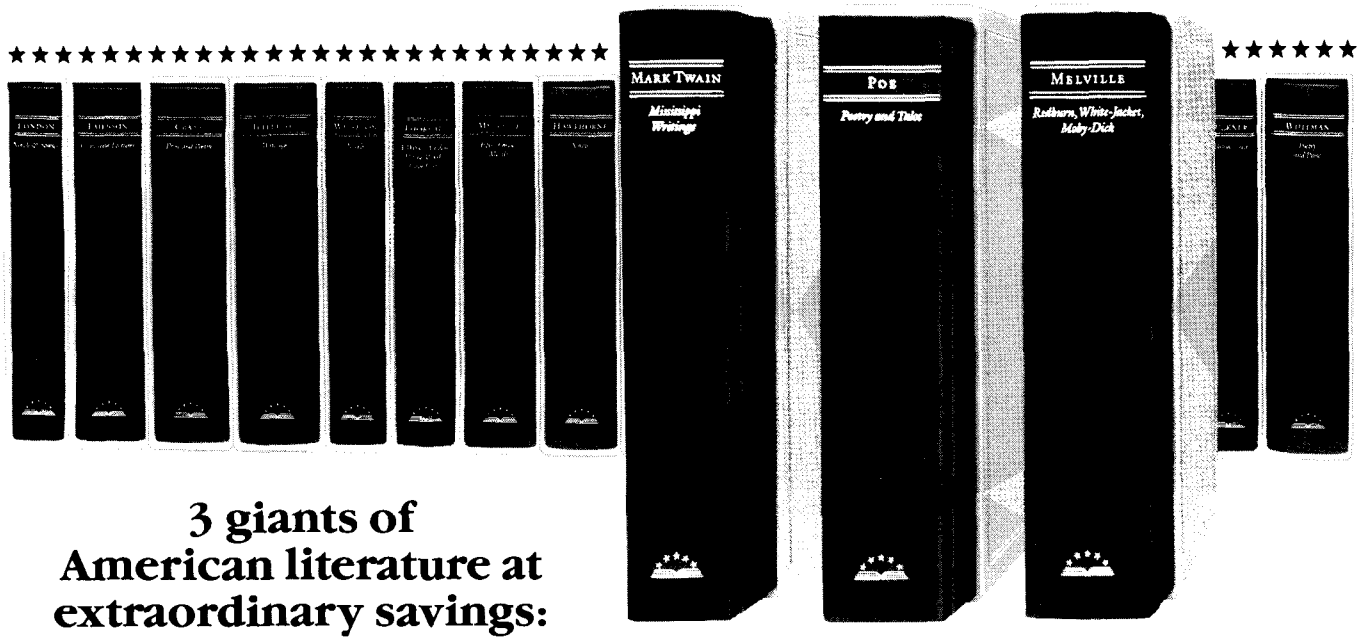

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of respected experience with colleagues in the House and the Senate. Only this week the fearful reports on the dangers of the greenhouse effect remind us of Gore's foresight on this issue and others in trying to alert the public to the ravages being visited on this planet by mankind's unexamined industrial habits. Like Nunn, Gore is a man of Southern virtues but no regional candidate.

Michael Dukakis could do much worse than Bradley, Nunn, or Gore. Among those he apparently is thinking about, we do not see how he can do better.

MICHAEL HARRINGTON

Liberal America, it has been said, makes room for only one notable socialist at a time. In our own time this has surely been Michael Harrington. Unlike his famed predecessors, Norman Thomas and Eugene V. Debs, Mike Harrington never ran for president. But he has played as large a role in the American political discourse. His 1960 book, *The Other America*, reminded Americans that a generation after FDR, perilously close to "one-third of a nation" was still ill-fed and ill-housed. The book by the 32-year-old Harrington had at least as much influence on the Kennedy-Johnson presidency as Thomas had on the New Deal. Subsequently, though holding fast to the socialist label, Harrington has insisted with equal fervor that progressive political change is possible only through the Democratic Party. The group he heads, Democratic Socialists of America (DSA), has helped to rescue Democrats from neoconservatism and the democratic left from political irrelevance.

Last fall, in his 60th year, Harrington learned that he had a particularly brutal form of cancer. Since then he has completed his autobiography, *The Long-Distance Runner* (Henry Holt), begun a new book on socialism, and is now researching yet another book on homelessness in America. It will be his 16th. Back in December Harrington's many friends began planning a testimonial and 60th birthday celebration, defiantly scheduled for June 30 to second Harrington's own brave persistence.

Mike Harrington has been an inspiration to many Americans because he combines a whole series of necessary opposites. He is a relentless agitator who is also a kind individual, a radical who insists on small-d democracy and abhors totalitarianism of every stripe, and a socialist who influences the mainstream. Unlike many radicals, he is a serious intellectual and a patriot. Even when the New Left was in its early, relatively benign phase, Harrington was apprehensive about the latent nihilism. He opposed the Vietnam War very much in the spirit of Norman Thomas's famous remark that the American flag should not be burned, but laundered. It has been Harrington's fate to be the sort of leftist that other leftists often mistrust as too moderate. Yet after emerging from half a lifetime of the sectarian infighting that so plagues American radicalism, Harrington has devoted his past 15 years to reconciliation and unity. To a surprising degree, he has succeeded.

NOTEBOOK

□ VOODOO UPDATE: "That's the single best issue we have in this campaign," says George Bush's campaign manager, Lee Atwater, about Governor Michael Dukakis's agreement to a five percent increase in cigarette taxes in order to balance the Massachusetts state budget. The *single best issue*? This? If so, it's more good news for the Democratic candidate. Bush and his handlers seem determined to carry the Reagan-era demagoguery about taxes to new extremes, but they're staking an awful lot on their apparent assumptions about the stupidity of the voting public. By law, the governor of Massachusetts must submit a balanced budget. Dukakis has done so, repeatedly. The president is under no such obligation, as Ronald Reagan has spectacularly demonstrated. Even with a lot of pie-in-the-sky blather about spending freezes and economic growth, Bush does not promise to balance the federal budget until 1991—and who believes he'll do it even then? It's hard to think of a less burdensome or more justified way to raise revenue than by increasing the cigarette tax. By contrast Ronald Reagan—unheralded—reigned over the biggest tax increase in the history of the world: the multi*trillion* dollar 1983 Social Security bailout. And he still can't get the books to balance.

□ EYE OF THE NEEDLE:

AIDS risk among drug abusers grows

—*Miami Herald*, June 16

Spread of AIDS Virus Slows Among Drug Users

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to Ulf T. Zimpel, Key West, Florida)

□ LET'S GET PHYSICAL:

Lakers don't want to accentuate the physical

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 16

Lakers Planning to Get More Physical

—*New York Times*, same day

(thanks to Glen Hoffing, Cherry Hill, New Jersey)

□ 'DUELING HEADLINES' GOES SUBCONTINENTAL:

Benazir strikes flexible note on elections

—*The Muslim* (Islamabad, Pakistan), June 7, top of page one

Benazir demands firm date for elections

—same paper, same day, bottom of page one

(thanks to Gregg Easterbrook, Lahore, Pakistan)

□ SUMMER READING: TNR readers who have been enjoying the crisp new style of our lead editorials in recent weeks

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may wish to invest $18.95 in *Three Scientists and Their Gods: Looking for Meaning in an Age of Information*, just published by Times Books. The author is TNR senior editor and chief editorial writer Robert Wright. (An excerpt was the cover story in the April *Atlantic*.)

□ TIME OUT: This is a double issue. TNR will not be published next week so the editors can reread the Federalist Papers in preparation for the fall election campaign.

CAMPAIGN '88

COLLEGE COUNSELING

HORACE BUSBY, who is not easily won over by Democratic presidential candidates, is impressed with Michael Dukakis. Busby, once a political confidant of Lyndon Johnson and now a Washington consultant, is the father of the theory that Republicans have an "electoral lock" on the presidency. He came up with that theory *before* the 1980 election, and Ronald Reagan's two victories buttressed his view that the Republican advantage in the Electoral College is all but insurmountable. But Dukakis's deft campaign has altered his thinking. Dukakis has an uphill fight, Busby says, but he can break the lock.

Republican George Bush has a more reliable base in the South and West, but in Busby's early reckoning, Dukakis racks up 132 electoral votes from solid, likely, or leaning Democratic states. These include Pennsylvania (25) and Michigan (20), but not California (47), New York (36), Illinois (24), Ohio (23), or Missouri (11). Dukakis currently leads in all five of these toss-up states, and by a sizable margin in several of them. When their electoral votes are added to the 132, Dukakis has 273. That's a majority—270 are needed—though hardly a comfortable one. Busby is far from calling the race for Dukakis.

The idea of an electoral lock, though highly controversial, is based on an indisputable power shift in presidential politics. Because millions of people have migrated, states in the South and West now have a majority of the votes in the Electoral College, which will convene December 19. And these states tend to be moderate or conservative, giving the Republican Party a clear advantage. Political analyst William Schneider says the GOP advantage was really created by the shift of the South from being solidly Democratic in presidential races to being invariably Republican. He agrees with Busby that the Republican advantage is "enormous."

Recent history makes the lock seem all the more formidable. In the last nine presidential elections—going back to Dwight Eisenhower's victory in 1952—Republicans have won 39 states a minimum of five times. These states have 441 electoral votes (out of a possible 538). In the last five elections 23 states with 202 electoral votes have gone Republican every time. Only the District of Columbia voted Democratic in all five. Minnesota did in four, but each time there was a Minnesotan on the ticket and this year there won't be. Besides the 23 GOP states, another 13 with 152 electoral votes have gone Republican four out of five. That's 36 states with 354 electoral votes, a considerable base.

These numbers are compelling, but Republican dominance can be explained just as easily by other factors. In 1952 Republicans nominated the most popular figure in America, Eisenhower, and four years later, he won reelection. In 1968 the Democratic Party was badly split and Richard Nixon won. In 1972, as an incumbent, he was reelected. Then in 1980 and 1984, the Ronald Reagan phenomenon swept the country. One thread through this period is the decline of the Democratic Party. Polls show a steady drop in voter identification with the party. But the decline wasn't accompanied by a surge in voter allegiance to the GOP. Although Republicans benefited from Democratic troubles in winning the White House, they didn't strengthen themselves enough to have a lock on anything.

Busby has a further refinement. In his May 9 newsletter he wrote, "The persistence of the Republican lock over four decades can be accounted for only by a public animus against the Democratic Party." Even when Jimmy Carter won the presidency in 1976, he suffered from it. He was 34 points ahead of Gerald Ford in the summer and won by two. "The only change to occur was that he had the party's nomination draped over him," Busby said. The drag of the national party is so harmful, according to Busby, that Carter would have lost in 1976 if the election had been held a week later.

What happens is that, after the convention, the candidate becomes identified with the liberal constituencies—labor, blacks, feminists, homosexuals—of the national party. Dukakis has managed to steer clear of their control, says Busby, which is why his candidacy has built a large edge over Bush in polls. Dukakis insists he is a "frugal" Democrat, not a big spender. Busby says this theme has "a great deal of potential." If the people can look at the man who's saying it and separate him from the negative image of Democrats in Washington, he can win. "Up to now, Dukakis fits to the winning mold, if one man can do it. One of his strengths is he's not from Washington," the home of the national Democratic Party. For Dukakis to win on November 8, voters "have to believe this is a man who will come to Washington and clean things up."

Dukakis has been aided by having Jesse Jackson as a left-wing foil. In Denver on June 24-25 the Dukakis campaign rebuffed Jackson's attempt to make the Democratic platform more left. Dukakis defeated a bid for higher taxes, a cut in Pentagon spending, a declaration of no first use of nuclear weapons, and a statement of support for a Palestinian homeland. The irrelevance of the Bush campaign has also helped. Bush and others liken Dukakis to George McGovern, the left-wing 1972 Democratic presidential nominee. "For 32-year-old voters, McGovern was when they were

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16-year-olds," says Busby. "The McGovern flap is over."

Busby dismisses the Dukakis scenario of piling up electoral votes in the eight most populous states, but it makes sense to me. Except for Florida (21) and Texas (29), these states are ripe for Democratic picking. Capturing California, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan would give Dukakis 175 electoral votes. True, California has gone Republican eight times in the last nine elections. But there was a Californian on the GOP ticket in six of those elections (Nixon four times, Reagan twice). Even Texas, Bush's home state, might go to Dukakis if Senator Lloyd Bentsen were his running mate.

I count nine smaller states with 66 electoral votes in the category of likely Democratic: Massachusetts (13), Maryland (10), Minnesota (10), Connecticut (8), Iowa (8), West Virginia (6), Rhode Island (4), Hawaii (4), and the District of Columbia (3). I know Iowa's gone Republican the last five times, but Dukakis led 60 percent to 32 percent in the last *Des Moines Register* poll. These nine states get Dukakis's electoral total to 241.

Another seven swing states with 52 electoral votes can get him over the top. These are Wisconsin (11), Missouri (11), Washington (10), Oregon (7), Arkansas (6), Maine (4), and Delaware (3). Grand total: 293. And I've left out a number of very winnable states. For instance, there are Tennessee (11), Kentucky (9), New Mexico (5), and Vermont (3). The point is that Dukakis has plenty of room for achieving an Electoral College majority. He has some margin for error.

I'M NOT ALONE in thinking this. Mark Siegel, a senior Democratic strategist and Washington consultant, gives Dukakis 311 electoral votes in his forecast and Bush 212. He has only two states as toss-ups, Arkansas and Kentucky. Charles Cook, an independent political analyst, puts Bush slightly ahead with 229 solid, likely, or leaning electoral votes to 199 for Dukakis. But as toss-ups, he includes California, Ohio, and Missouri with 81 electoral votes, enough to put Dukakis past 270. Siegel and Cook agree on one thing: there's no GOP lock in 1988.

Bush's supposedly impregnable redoubt is the South. Under normal circumstances Dukakis would have no chance in any states in the Virginia-to-Louisiana corridor. But a Southern running mate might change the chemistry of the campaign in the South. One pollster tested the difference between Dukakis with and without a Southerner on the ticket. His conclusion: with a Southerner, Dukakis has a good shot at winning Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas, and North Carolina. Victory is attainable, though difficult, in Texas, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. In Florida and Virginia Dukakis has no chance, regardless of his running mate.

This may all be pollster nonsense. But Dukakis doesn't even need the South to win. After all, the alleged Republican lock began in 1952, when Eisenhower won the White House while losing most Southern states.

FRED BARNES

David Mamet dialogue.

WHITE HOUSE OF GAMES

"DUKAKIS, JACKSON DISCUSS THE VICE PRESIDENCY"
—*Washington Post*, June 21

"I don't fuck with my friends, Don. I don't fuck with my business associates. I am a businessman. I am here to do business. I face facts." —Teach to Don in *American Buffalo*, by David Mamet

The scene is a smoke-filled room. On either side of a long wooden table sits a man, a man in a suit. One is tall and black, the other short and white, with bushy eyebrows. For dramatic effect, there are glasses and several papers on the table.

THE BLACK MAN: What I want? Let me tell you what I want. What I want is simply this.
THE SHORT MAN: Yes?
BM: And you are asking me what I want.
SM: That's why we're here. Yes. People are waiting.
BM: So I will tell you. I want—this is not something a man like me likes to say.
SM: Yes.
BM: So—what? What? Do you see what I am saying?
SM: That's why we're here. To see this thing clear. To understand this thing. To make this thing understandable and satisfying to us. Mutually.
BM: OK, then.
SM: So—what do you want?
BM: Because I got my pride. I'm not looking for a free ride.
SM: I'm aware of that.
BM: This isn't easy for me.
SM: I'm being delicate.
BM: Let me tell you.
SM: I know what it is to be down. I've been down. I know what it is to be up. I am up. But also what I know is this: that there is a difference between down and up. Are you following me?
BM: Go on.
SM: I'm making myself clear?
BM: So far, yes.
SM: You've drawn your card. You must tell me what you want. I have ways to work this out. There are ways.
BM: I want it.
SM: You want it.
BM: That's what I said.
SM: I am hearing you. I am hearing that you said that you want it. This is registering, but it is not making sense to me.
BM: It is what I said. What the fuck?
SM: What the fuck? You ask, What the fuck? Are you crazy? I'll tell you. Are you fucking crazy? Do you know what this means? To me, to me and all those who are counting on me in November?
BM: First listen. I have said that I want it, I have that right. I

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have earned that right. I've traveled many miles. As they say—what do they say?—let the people decide.
SM: They did. Don't you see. We're not in this for us. If that were the case—Jesus! We're talking about history here.
BM: I *am* history.
SM: I realize that.
BM: That's why we're here.
SM: OK, OK.
BM: To tell it like it is. For what it means. Not just for us, for me, and for the country. I mean, what the fuck.
SM: Don't preach to me.
BM: Don't what?
SM: Don't preach. I'm a reasonable man. Jesus fuck, appeal to my sense of reason.
BM: I am. I want it. I want to share the ticket.
SM: You want to share the ticket. That's unreasonable.
BM: I think it would be nice. I think I've earned it. It is what I want.
SM: You want it.
BM: It would be nice.
SM: You know that we would lose?
BM: There's no harm in trying. Don't be a pussy. We'd make history.
SM: Let me think about it.
BM: We have 'til July.
SM: I'll take it into consideration.
BM: I appreciate that.
SM: For now, what should we say?
BM: For now?
SM: For now. To the others, to the ones who ask. To the press.
BM: I'll say, I have made up my mind about what I'd say if you offered me the vice presidency. Then I won't say what I'll say, or whether it's been offered.
SM: We must talk again.

At this point the discussion is ended, to be picked up in several days' time.

ARI POSNER

SCIENCE AND SOCIETY

AIDS AGAIN

THE NEXT FAD in AIDS reporting will likely be declarations that the epidemic is waning. A few scientists are pushing the idea. For every disease in human history, a time has come when the rate of new infections has leveled off, where the "target population" becomes saturated at a certain level. AIDS too will reach that point, but it hasn't yet. "It is dangerous and delusionary to say that we are at the beginning of the end," says Dr. Jonathan Mann of the World Health Organization. "Such talk becomes an excuse for avoiding actions which will save many lives."

Using the logic common to journalism, reporters and editors might accept the demise of AIDS for lack of anything new to say about it. Indeed, the biggest news from the International AIDS Conference in Stockholm was the dearth of it. The estimate that five million to ten million people in the world are infected with the AIDS virus was offered at the Paris conference back in 1986. The fact that an American is diagnosed with AIDS every 14 minutes is simply another way of describing the depressingly familiar and steadily climbing incidence rates that were predicted accurately by the Public Health Service almost two years ago. That number will climb steadily to about one every five minutes during 1991.

The Stockholm meeting lacked hard news not because the danger is easing, but because the study of AIDS has become a mature science similar to cancer research. Every newly discovered fact is not a revelation. Most of the papers presented offered details of little interest to the general public. What did emerge was a clear picture of the possibilities and limitations for controlling AIDS in the future. Dr. Harold Jaffe, who has tracked the epidemic for the Centers for Disease Control since its inception, put it this way: "The easy part is over."

The virus will not spread again as it did before it was known, and some populations may indeed be saturated. It is unlikely that the portion of gay men in San Francisco who are infected with the virus will climb much beyond the current level of 50 percent. But because of the long incubation period, and because symptoms may not appear for five or ten years after infection, the rate of disease, as opposed to infection, among gay men in San Francisco will not peak for several more years. Public health officials around the world point to San Francisco as an example of how educational campaigns can change sexual behavior. So it is important to remember that one out of 50 gay men in the city is still becoming infected with the virus every year. That's two or three new infections every day. Studies in other cities show that the rates of new infection among gays are higher. Such research gives little cause for celebration.

As the presidential AIDS commission members and almost anyone else who has taken a serious look at the problem has discovered, in the United States drug users present the biggest danger of AIDS spreading to themselves and others. The one public policy action that would prevent the most people from getting AIDS in this country would be the distribution of sterile needles and syringes. But that will not happen in any meaningful way. Many black leaders, most notably in New York City, view the idea as a step toward legalizing drugs and thus the abandonment of a generation in the ghetto. It is no accident that the first free needle program in the United States will be in Portland, Oregon, one of the few American cities where almost all of the junkies are white.

The opposition to clean needles is understandable but regrettable. Studies from Amsterdam show that making the needles easily available there, even from vending ma-

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chines at night, has cut the spread of AIDS without increasing the incidence of drug use. In Edinburgh, when police tried to limit access to needles, there was a huge jump in the number of AIDS cases. When the police let up, so did the spread of the virus. The problem with American addicts is not a lack of knowledge. Almost every one of them knows that sharing needles spreads the virus, but as an addict in a shooting gallery told me in 1985, "When you're sick you don't think about no AIDS or nothing, you just get yourself some works and you get off."

Increased access to treatment will help, but it certainly won't stop the spread. Often addicts enrolled in methadone programs inject themselves with cocaine. And most drop out of the programs a few months after they start. Researchers can now estimate the number of people becoming infected through needle sharing: 40,000 a year in the United States. Most of them are heterosexuals who will spread the virus to other heterosexuals and to their children in the womb. Sixty percent of the addicts in the slums of New York City and northern New Jersey are infected now. The numbers drop off the farther you go from New York.

The study of more than 2,000 emergency room admissions, selected at random, at Johns Hopkins Hospital shows how prevalent infection is in Baltimore. More than one out of 20 of those tested were infected. Fewer than one-third of the infected were clearly identifiable as members of a risk group. In other hospitals the rates have been higher still.

The Stockholm meeting was free of the rancor between Africans and Westerners that has characterized past international gatherings. Most African nations now regard AIDS as a serious threat, but it is easy to understand why they did not at first. Not only were they being blamed for the disease; it was a small health problem compared with the others they suffer. Diarrhea kills five million children in the world every year. Measles kills two million. Two million die of starvation. Many preventable diseases kill more people every day than AIDS kills in a year. The attention and money for AIDS is clearly medical imperialism. If AIDS were just another problem in poor countries, it would not be receiving the money and attention it does now. The World Health Organization's budget contains $66 million for its AIDS program and $330 million for everything else.

Dr. Mann, who heads the WHO AIDS program, acknowledges that the developed world's interest is anything but selfless. "Purely in terms of development, the loss of a 35-year-old teacher, engineer, or any professional is far more devastating than the death of an infant," he said. More important, "AIDS highlights the inadequacies of the current health care system." When Mann first arrived at WHO, many of his colleagues saw AIDS as a media hype. Increasing numbers now accept the view that AIDS assistance can be the vehicle to help in other areas. For instance, cleaning up the supply of blood for transfusion will slow the spread not just of AIDS, but of many diseases.

Papers presented in Stockholm evoked familiar themes. A vaccine is ten or more years away. Treatment will improve gradually. In the developed world scientists will find more and more drugs, and some patients will live longer, until some will be alive five, then ten and 15 years after diagnosis. An analogy is often drawn between AIDS and childhood leukemia, which was almost always fatal a few years ago. Now new combinations of drugs allow many children to grow up normally, even though the disease is never cured. Of course, such drug combinations will be far too expensive for most poor countries.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News.

A shopper's guide.

DUKAKONOMICS

Brookline

In the dog days between now and the Democratic convention, there will be lots of speculation about the likely economic policy of a Dukakis administration, and lots of jockeying to influence it. In the world of policy-mongering, countless telephones are ringing with requests from people doing memos for people doing memos for people hoping to ingratiate themselves with the Dukakis policy office. Mostly this daisy chain is a colossal waste of time. Few of the memos will get read. This is a season for politics, not policy. The real policies will be determined when (and if) Dukakis takes office. But the elbowing for position is important, for the people who wind up with the jobs will affect the ultimate policies.

If Dukakis is elected, he'll face almost unprecedented constraints on his room to maneuver, thanks to the fiscal vise he inherits from the Reagan administration. The squeeze will be compounded by whatever concessions he makes to the Jackson forces in the way of commitments to restore or expand domestic spending programs. The fact that Jesse Jackson is "behaving himself" and pressing for program and staffing commitments rather than the vice presidency is a mixed blessing for Dukakis. It averts a nasty convention showdown, but makes for an expensive bill later on.

Dukakis's record as governor provides some clues to his likely economic course as president. Needless to say, several of the most crucial areas of presidential policy-making, such as macroeconomics and foreign trade, have no Massachusetts counterparts. But even in these areas one can infer a direction from Dukakis's governing style. Herewith a speculative guide to Dukakonomics.

Tax-and-spend. Dukakis is essentially a liberal who favors activist government and social spending—but only as long as it doesn't lead to taxpayer backlash. At that point he typically scuttles to fiscal conservatism. When Dukakis first became governor in 1975, he inherited a massive defi-

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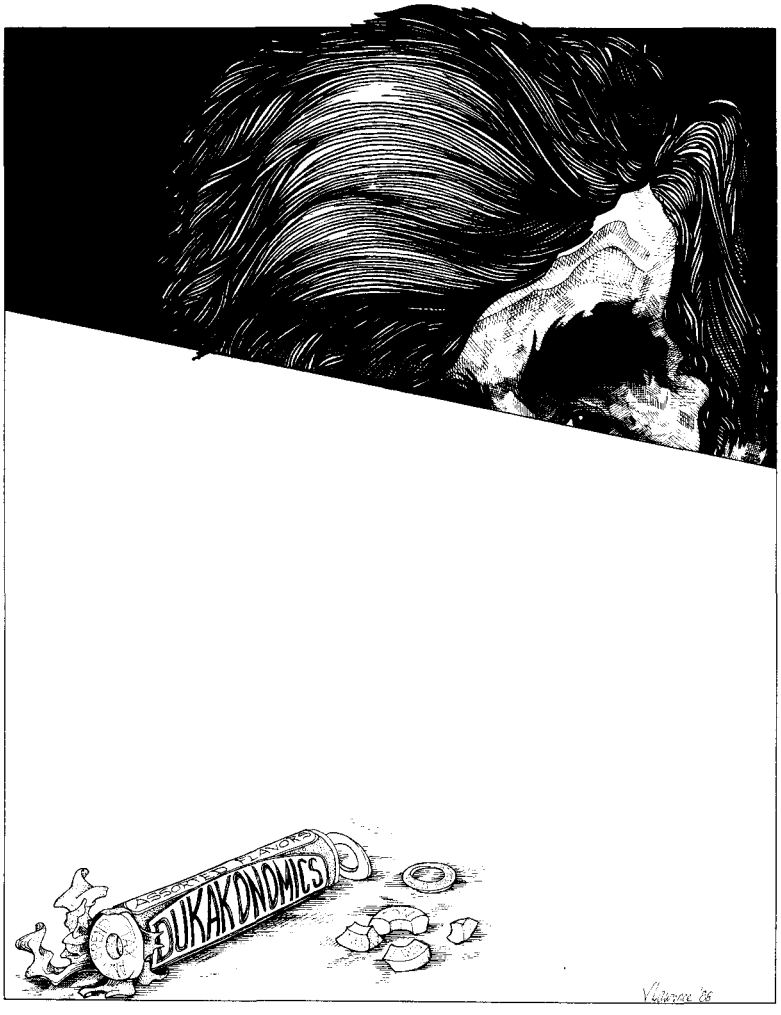
cit, compounded by a recession—a situation that could have eerie portents for 1989. Dukakis reacted by pledging no new taxes. Then he slashed social spending. Finally, he bowed to the inevitable and presided over a $3 billion tax increase. This course alienated nearly everybody. The liberals concluded he was a fair-weather ally. The conservatives concluded he was a high taxer. In large measure, Dukakis was defeated for re-election in 1978 because of distrust lingering from 1975.

When he returned to office in 1983, having defeated Governor Ed King in a rematch, Dukakis was reborn as a fiscal conservative. Luckily for him, the mid-1980s turned out to be a period of boom for Massachusetts, intensified by the superb tax-enforcement program of state revenue commissioner Ira Jackson, one of Dukakis's closest and smartest advisers. As a result the commonwealth's revenue increased far faster than personal income. In just three years, from fiscal 1984 to 1987, state tax collections increased from $5.5 billion to over $8 billion, without any hike in tax rates.



DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

How Dukakis chose to spend that windfall sheds some light on his economic druthers. Some $700 million was simply given back to the taxpayers through tax rate cuts. Another billion went for increased state aid to city and town governments, a way of compensating them for the loss of revenues that resulted from Proposition 2½, Massachusetts's 1980 property tax revolt. When all these tax cuts and revenue windfalls are netted out, Dukakis is seen to have kept total state and local spending at a roughly constant fraction of personal income. Where he did spend new money his priorities were indeed those of a Massachusetts liberal, though the sums of money were characteristically modest, if not token.

These included a grudging increase in minimums for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and new money for day care, housing, and treatment for the mentally ill. In general, Massachusetts human service outlays are among the nation's most generous, a feat made easier by the commonwealth's low unemployment and poverty rates. Dukakis also takes justifiable pride in the state's Employment Training choices ("ET") program, one of the country's most humane and least vindictive versions of workfare.

Nonetheless, the commonwealth's liberal activists don't consider Dukakis one of their own. They complain that his fiscal prudence leads him to take well-devised programs and fund them at meager levels. And, faced with a choice between a program he cares about and the friendship of the state's business, he usually chooses business.

Moreover, some of the state's boldest programs, such as its worker retraining initiatives, its "social compact" to provide notice of plant closings, and its new universal health insurance program, were inflicted on the governor rather than sought by him. On the other hand, some of the partnership approaches to economic development—such as Massachusetts's mini-industrial policy—were very much the creation of Dukakis and his inner staff, designed in close consultation with the business community.

All of this means that on the campaign trail Dukakis can have it both ways. Programs like homeownership opportunity and day care and jobs for AFDC recipients and universal health insurance are nothing to be ashamed of. He can tout them to the traditional Democratic constituency with good effect. At the same time, thanks to the Massachusetts windfall years, he can also represent himself as a true fiscal conservative who not only didn't raise taxes but actually handed out refunds. This brand of penny-pinching liberalism is broadly popular.

The trouble, of course, is that the fiscal magic was mostly circumstantial. Once in the White House the alchemy would reverse. Dukakis would be in the position of having to raise taxes and/or reduce outlays. His first instinct, probably, would be to rein in spending.

Macro, Micro, or Maso? The next president's budgetary straitjacket may not be as bad as forecast. The Gramm-Rudman law requires staged deficit cuts, leading to a balanced budget in 1993. Depending on how the economy

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does, that would require a deficit reduction on the order of $50 billion to $60 billion in Dukakis's first budget. However, that could well be fiscal overkill, and knock the economy into a recession. An amended Gramm-Rudman law would permit a more permissive trajectory, aimed at producing a deficit of about $80 billion by 1993. That would get the deficit in line with postwar norms (one to two percent of GNP) and be much less excruciating.

HERE THE KEY question is where Dukakis decides to take his advice. Many of the usual Brookings Institution suspects are vigorously touting the idea that the steadily rising Social Security surplus (which offsets part of the current deficit) should be taken out of the federal budget, and the non-Social Security part of the budget should be moved into balance. This approach is advanced as one means of raising the national savings rate. However, it would require tax hikes and spending cuts of some $50 billion more than even Gramm-Rudman now requires, and would intensify the political pain. In a similar vein, the National Economic Commission, a panel of fiscally conservative elders whose report is due in December, is said to be close to recommending a substantial tax increase early in the next administration, with virtually all of the money going toward deficit reduction rather than spending. This is characterized as doing the dirty work that the next president can't afford to do on the campaign trail lest he be Mondalized.

A second question for Dukakis is how much to rely on macroeconomic measures (traditional monetary and fiscal policies) and how much to use sectoral and industrial strategies of the sort he championed in Massachusetts, such as subsidies aimed at particular regions or technologies. Here again, the choice of advisers will be key. As it happens, the two camps in the Dukakis administration are personified by two contributors to THE NEW REPUBLIC, Lawrence Summers and Robert B. Reich.

Summers is a highly regarded macroeconomist, and a protégé of Martin Feldstein, Reagan's former Council of Economic Advisers chairman. He's fairly liberal on issues like the distribution of the tax burden, and fairly orthodox on the centrality of such macroeconomic factors as the value of the dollar, the savings rate, and the size of the deficit. In his writings he has argued that the deficit needs to come way down (via progressive taxation); the savings rate needs to rise; the dollar needs to decline further; and that these goals are far more important than sectoral or industrial policies, which are at best frosting on the cake and at worst delusional.

Reich, on the other hand, is a champion of sectoral policies, upgrading the quality of workers, and brokering new social contracts. Reich is probably closer to Dukakis personally, but Summers, because of both the prominence of macroeconomic issues and his personal relationship with campaign chairman Paul Brountas, has emerged as the visible economics spokesman. This has placed Summers in the slightly awkward position of having to all but recant some of his most cherished beliefs, including the virtues of a tax increase and the general worthlessness of sectoral policies. Summers wrote a long letter to the *Wall Street Journal* gamely defending Dukakis against criticism of his sectoral policies, insisting that Massachusetts provided a happy middle ground between the invisible hand and the helping hand of government.

A Dukakis industrial policy would be minimalist art. His initiatives in Massachusetts, like the Centers of Excellence program, which ties academic research to industrial applications, are low-budget, carefully targeted affairs. He doesn't have the ideological aversion to industrial targeting that's common among Democratic Party economists, but he's averse to spending money. This is a governor, after all, who was spotted taking a Life Saver out of his mouth before he began a speech, setting it aside, and popping it back in afterward.

A Dukakis industrial policy would probably yield things much like the Sematech consortium of large U.S. electronics concerns. It would be "close to the market," involve applied research by industry rather than government, and spend government money only when industry was willing to spend its own first.

The macro vs. micro debate has often been miscast as an either/or proposition, as it was in the Carter administration, when Charles Schultze at the Council of Economic Advisers and traditionalists at the Treasury Department joined forces to make "industrial policy" a term of ridicule. A Dukakis administration would almost surely see macro and micro economics as a both/and proposition. And unlike the vintage Carter industrial policy, Dukakis's efforts would assist leading-edge industries. In the Carter years nobody was ever sure whether "industrial policy" was supposed to bail out failing firms, protect union jobs, or "pick winners" even at the cost of jobs.

All the Duke's men. Dukakis is very likely to surround himself with people both in the Summers and the Reich mold because of his habit of drawing on minds that he finds interesting, even if they happen to disagree. Other presidents, as different as Reagan and Roosevelt, had similarly diverse advisers. Where a president is well versed, and in touch, as Roosevelt was, this can be a fertile style of governing. Where a president is detached, it can produce a tangle of inconsistent and mutually defeating policies, as Reaganomics ultimately did. Dukakis is much more like Roosevelt. He's very engaged, and confident that he's the intellectual equal of any adviser.

In 1989 Dukakis would probably be forced to accept some sort of tax increase, but he'd almost surely insist on bipartisan responsibility for it. And given both his priorities and Jackson's convention influence, he would very likely spend some of the revenue rather than devote it all to deficit reduction. At the same time, if Mikhail Gorbachev survives and Dukakis doesn't take excessive direction from advisers who want to trade nuclear disarmament for a costly conventional buildup, then some fiscal relief may come in the form of a peace dividend. Reagan's embrace of Gorbachev, fortuitously, has made it all but impossible for Bush to criticize Dukakis as soft on the Reds.

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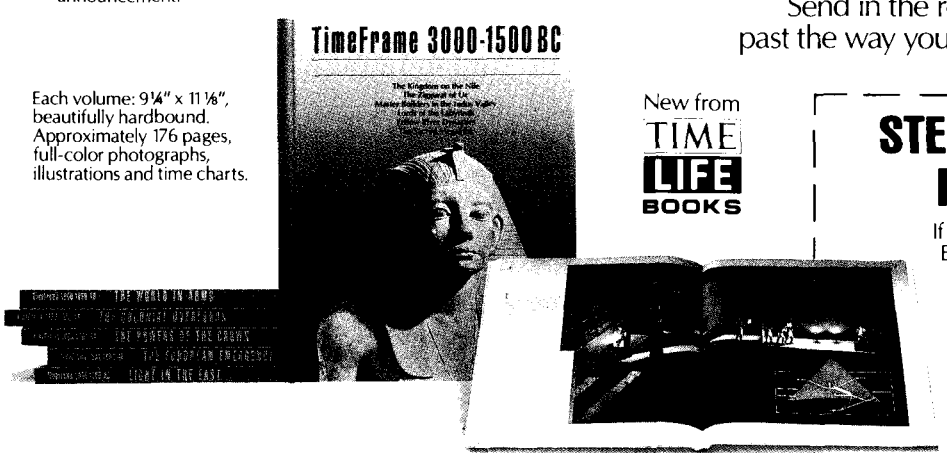

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Time Frame

Traditional history just became a thing of the past.

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A Democrat taking office in 1989 will meet a long line of claimants on the federal purse—not the usual "special interest groups" but harder-to-deny general interests: consensus policy goals that have jelled during the Reagan years. These include broader health insurance, welfare reform, a child-care policy, and intensified labor and education measures. They comport well with Dukakis's own record in Massachusetts.

Dukakis's brand of liberalism is pretty good politics during an election campaign, as is his brand of fiscal management. But that appeal will quickly disappear once the Democrats' irresistible policy agenda meets the immovable reality of the budget deficit. Thus the irony: George Bush will find Michael Dukakis rather hard to target as just another tax-and-spend liberal. But Dukakis may find it very hard to govern.

ROBERT KUTTNER

What they thought about our Revolution.

THE SHOT HEARD ROUND THE WORLD

BY HENRY FAIRLIE

"Here once the embattled farmers stood
And fired the shot heard round the world."
—Hymn sung at the completion of the Battle Monument
Concord, July 4, 1837

The claim in Emerson's line is expansive. Can it be true that the shot was heard round the world—when there were no satellites, no television, no radio, no telephone? Let us see.

It then took from five to six weeks for news to cross the Atlantic. (The first regular passenger service between England and the colonies was instituted in 1755.) Thus the news of the "battles" of Lexington and Concord, fought on April 19, 1775, appeared on May 29 in the London press, from which the French papers, as usual, took their news of America; and from them the press in the rest of Europe picked up the story. By June 19 it appeared in a newspaper as far away as St. Petersburg. Similarly the news of the Declaration of Independence was first published in a London newspaper on August 17, 1776; a week later it appeared in papers in Hamburg, on August 30 in Sweden, and on September 2 in Denmark. The actions in Lexington and Concord had been no more than skirmishes in two villages whose names Europeans can never have heard before. Yet the news excited editors across Europe, and they knew it would arouse their readers. The saw *at once* the size of the event.

In 1775-76 the French Revolution had not sounded its tocsin to the peoples of Europe. Most of them lived under the rule of a few absolute monarchs: Louis XVI in France; Maria Theresa (as dowager empress) and her son Joseph II in Austria and the Holy Roman Empire; Frederick the Great in Prussia; Catherine the Great in Russia; and Christian VII in Denmark. It was the age of the "enlightened despots," who genuinely had the welfare of their subjects at heart, but though they proclaimed the right of their peoples to be well governed, they did not acknowledge their right to govern themselves. The only monarch who had (sourly) learned the ABCs of freedom was, paradoxically, the one against whom the colonists were rebelling. The English were far freer than any peoples on the Continent. But the English reaction to the news from America is more interesting if we know how the shot was heard on the other side of the English channel.

Maria Theresa had ascended the throne in 1740 at the age of 23. Even then she realized that the old order could not survive, and set about instituting a series of effective reforms. Her scarcely less remarkable son, who succeeded his father as co-regent in 1765, produced the most thought-out exposition of the duties of an enlightened despot. They received the news of the Declaration at about the same time it reached London, and two weeks before it found its way through the heavy censorship into the daily press in Vienna. Taking a dim view of popular uprisings, Maria Theresa expressed to George III her "hearty desire to see the restoration of obedience and tranquility in every quarter of his dominions," and Joseph told the British ambassador, "The cause in which England is engaged . . . is the cause of all sovereigns who have a joint interest in the maintenance of due subordination . . . in all the surrounding monarchies."

The rulers feared that their subjects would see the American action not as a rebellion against a rightful monarch in his own territories—there had been plenty of rebellions against European sovereigns—but as the proclamation of a revolutionary doctrine of universal application, as the Declaration indeed announced it to be. Thus, although the Declaration was at last allowed through the censorship in Vienna, when the *Wienerisches Diarium* the next year explained the War of Independence as a clash between two political principles—monarchy and popular sovereignty—Maria Theresa was outraged, even though the paper had covered itself by printing an editorial saying that this view of the rebellion was mistaken.

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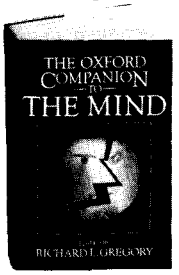

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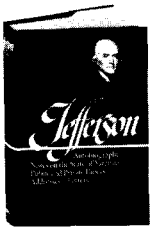

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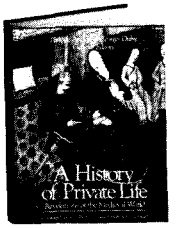

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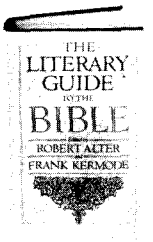

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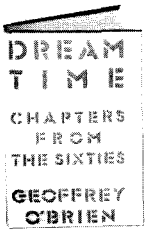

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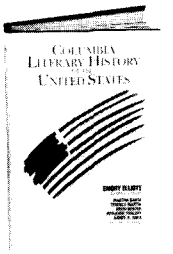

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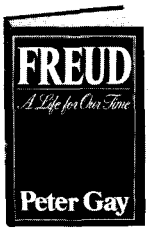

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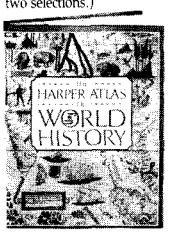

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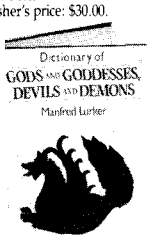

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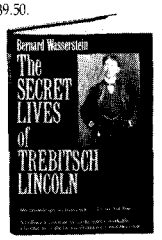

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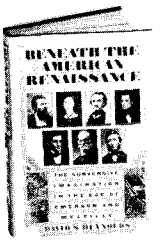

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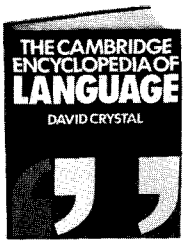

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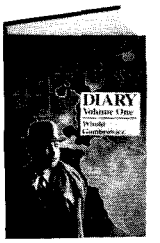

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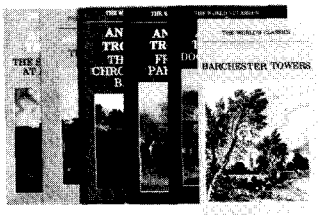

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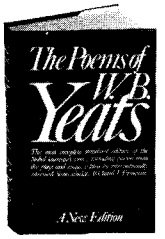

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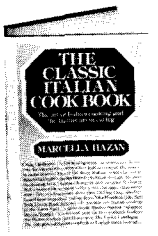

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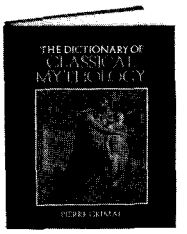

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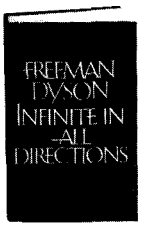

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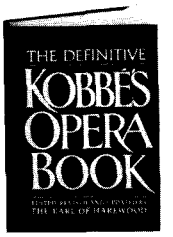

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Similarly, when the news of Lexington and Concord got through the censors into the *Sanktpeterburgskie Vedemosti*, the Americans were, in deference to the Empress Catherine, firmly called "rebels." In 1780, when Catherine read the Abbé Raynal's history of Europe's dominions overseas and came to his chapter on the American Revolution, she wrote to a friend: "The American record is filled with declarations in which there is too little that is reasonable and too much that is unbecoming impertinence."

IN BELGIUM, which was then under the rule of Austria, it was clear that the subjects of the enlightened despots might take the American "impertinence" as an example. From as early as 1766, when the *Gazette des Pays-Bas* in Brussels reported the remonstrations of colonial assemblies in America, the Belgian press followed American affairs intently. In four Belgian newspapers and journals the Maryland Constitution was printed in 1777, the Massachusetts Constitution in 1780, some of a collection of the constitutions of all 13 states in 1783, Virginia's Code of Civil and Criminal Laws in 1786, and in the following year the U.S. Constitution in full. This steady flow of news (including the reports of the war and of American victories) could only stir up the middle class in Belgium. They enjoyed neither national independence nor a constitution guaranteeing any basic political rights, while each day the Americans were remaking their political and civil society before the eye of the world. By 1787 a strong movement for independence and a new constitution was growing in Belgium.

In the debates that were provoked in Europe we can see how the shot was heard. We can follow them (as they were conducted in the press) through the 25 or so out-of-the-way historical monographs, memoirs, and so on, that are the main source of this story. Throughout the debates a constant appeal was made to the example of America. Liberty had been crushed in Poland, was struggling in Holland, said Lambert d'Outrement, a lawyer in Liege, but it had been maintained in England, and triumphed in America: "What will be the lot of the Austrian Low Countries?" There could be only one answer. Belgium would try itself. Toward the end of 1789 the States-General of the Austrian Netherlands deposed Joseph II and proclaimed the *United States* of Belgium. The Belgian Declaration of Independence (and the equivalent declarations of the provinces of Belgium, like the states in America) followed the American Declaration faithfully. In the Manifeste de la Province de Flandre (1790), "the Course of Human Events" became "*un Concours de circonstances . . . extraordinaires*," and continued: "*En conséquence . . . au juge suprême de l'Univers . . . a droit d'être un Etat libre et indépendant*"—almost word for word the American original.

Thus, although the French Revolution had by then erupted, the inspiration was coming from America. The working people of Europe, it was said in the Belgian debates, must inevitably look to America. They had learned that conditions for the likes of them were better there, and many were emigrating. A telling use was made of America's distance from the mother country, since Belgium, like many of the territories of the Austrian Empire, was remote from the imperial capital and government in Vienna. Moreover when, during the War of Independence, the absolute monarchs of Europe entered into relations (and even alliances) with the Americans, they were in effect endorsing revolution. The monarchs might say that the American Revolution was intolerable, but by their actions they were telling their peoples that revolution was not a crime, but as d'Outrement said, "*un beau monument élevé à la liberté.*"

THE SIGNIFICANCE Europeans attached to America was underlined by the deftness and even courage with which editors across the Continent managed to circumvent the censorship. In 1775-76 Denmark was a significant power. It included Norway (and Greenland, a Norwegian possession), Schleswig and Holstein, Iceland, and three West Indian islands, St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John (which were later sold to the United States). Given the insanity of Christian VII, it was governed by a court party as an enlightened despotism, and as usual a significant part of the extensive bureaucracy was the ever watchful censorship.

On August 23, 1776, the *Altonaischer Mercurius* (a German-language newspaper published in Altona in Holstein) printed an edited version of the Declaration, which was then translated and printed at the top of the front page of the *Kiobenhavske* [Copenhagen] *Tidender*, the newspaper with the largest circulation in Denmark. In both papers it appeared uncut as far as the sentence "The History of the present King of Great-Britain is a History of repeated Injuries and Usurpations, all having in direct Object the Establishment of absolute Tyranny over these States." The trouble was that the intermittently insane George III was one of the demented Christian's closest allies. So in the above sentence, the words "King of Great-Britain" were replaced by "the present ministry of Great Britain." But the Declaration continued with the long list of grievances against George, and it was all too likely that any Danish reader would have begun ticking off in his mind his own grievances against the Danish monarchy. Ingeniously, the *Mercurius* solved the problem by publishing the Declaration in two halves, the second (with the grievances) appearing on August 26, in which all the references to King George were replaced by the anonymous "*Er*" (he). This appeased the censors; it cannot have fooled the readers.

How different it was in the New World. Over in the West Indies, the only Danish newspaper, the *Royal Danish American Gazette*, published (significantly) in English, printed the complete Declaration as early as August 17, even placing it prominently on the front page, which was otherwise reserved for advertising. The Danes in the colonies seemed themselves to have become Americans.

It was not only the editors in Denmark (and elsewhere), nosy for news, who were excited by the events in America. As early as October 22, 1776, A. P. Bernstorff, the great Danish minister for foreign affairs, wrote to a friend: "The public here is extremely occupied with the rebels [in America], not because they know the cause, but because the mania of independence in reality has infected all the

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spirits, and the poison has spread imperceptibly from the works of the philosophes all the way out to the village schools." Those last eight words, from such a source, tell us something we need to know.

So does a firsthand glimpse of the popular mood in Copenhagen. The *Aftenpost* carried a column—as we would now call it—by one Edmund Balling, describing life in the city; it sounds like a city column by Jimmy Breslin or Mike Royko. Balling dropped into alehouses, which he described as "our political schools of Fencing, those bourgeois Art of War Listening Rooms, where our little Politici, during a Glass of Ale, a Pinch of Snuff and a Pipe of Tobacco," tossed about the issues of the day. At the end of 1776 he found them debating the War of Independence. One said the Americans were rebels, and "ought to be beaten over the Forehead like Bullocks"; another countered that "the English ought to be thrashed"; a third had no doubt that the English had got "something to chew on"; and a sausage-stuffer called it an "accursed War" because the rice from South Carolina had become so dear, and what could he now stuff his sausages with in place of meat? On January 12, 1778, Balling told of a man entering an alehouse (after reading the news, one guesses, of Burgoyne's defeat): "Good evening, Gentlemen! Ha! Ha! Have we the newspapers? Well, what does England say now? . . . Yes, this War will likely make a rather considerable Change in Europe."

As in Belgium, the impact did not lessen even after America achieved its independence. In 1820 a Danish civil servant, C. F. von Schmidt-Phiseldeck, called the Fourth of July "this forever memorable day." And in our own time a Danish historian has said that "the Declaration of Independence had a decisive impact on the course of events leading to the attainment in 1849 of Denmark's first democratic constitution."

BUT AS WE come across the editors, their newspapers, and their readers, the European response is telling us something very important about the American Revolution itself. It was carried in the colonies and overseas by the assertiveness of the American middle class. One of George III's more apt comments was that his sovereignty was being challenged by a lot of "grocers." Marx was really saying no more when he declared that "the American Revolution sounded the tocsin for the European bourgeoisie," and gave "the first impulse to the European Revolution." Lenin later said the War of Independence was "one of those great, truly liberating, truly revolutionary wars"—something that cannot be said of the revolution he wrought in Russia.

Two vigorous merchant cities—Hamburg and Dubrovnik—illustrate the response of a newly aggressive merchant class in Europe. Hamburg was a free port, as most of its dock area still is (its official name even now is the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg), and since the Reformation had been the proud refuge of Protestants, other dissidents, and refugees. Ports are naturally liberal, being used to strangers, with their different cultures and ideas. When the Declaration was published in the *Staats und Gelehrte Zeitung*, its citizens naturally sympathized with the colonies in their claim to be a free trading nation, with which Hamburg could expand its commercial ties (as it did after the war), greatly reinforcing its prosperity. Completing the story, another cargo would eventually stream through Hamburg: a vast number of immigrants to the New World from Russia and Eastern Europe. Dubrovnik had risen to be a powerful merchant republic in the Middle Ages, and had existed since then (virtually independent) under the protection, in succession, of Venice, Hungary, and Turkey—until Napoleon, with his usual disrespect for history, abolished the republic in 1806, the same year in which he occupied Hamburg. Again, far away on the Adriatic, the citizens of a strong merchant port were stimulated by the news from America, a point made in a book published by the city of Dubrovnik to celebrate the bicentennial of the Declaration.

IT IS the response of the middle class in Europe that throws light on the attitudes in England. To the ruling class in England the Declaration of Independence did not herald the dawn of a new age, or introduce new abstract principles of freedom and equality that had a universal application. In fact, it seemed to them less of a threat than it did to the ruling monarchs on the Continent, since they enjoyed many of the freedoms the Americans were claiming. It was to them a very local document, a list (as indeed it was) of very local grievances. Neither it nor any shot, in their view, was heard round the world. Both had been aimed, after all, at them; and on the whole they took it like gentlemen.

Here was a war in which the First British Empire, as it is known to history, was falling, and it is natural we should wish that the author of *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, who was a member of Parliament throughout the war, had offered a long historical perspective or a few grand philosophical reflections on so great an event. But Edward Gibbon's attitude was not only devious; it was corrupt, even if in the accepted manner of the day. No one can blame him for wishing to write the great book, or for wishing to receive some patronage as he labored at his task. He looked, of course, to the government for an appointment, and accepted the post of one of the Lords Commissioner of Trade and Plantations. With this sinecure, his voice and vote were bought by George III and his ministers, which makes one appreciate even more the king's dig at him one day, "Scribble, scribble, scribble, eh, Mr. Gibbon?"

At the end of the difficult parliamentary session in 1775, Gibbon was glad to get away, saying that "having saved the British I must destroy the Roman Empire." But this little jest was capped by an American. Horace Walpole reported with delight in a letter in 1781: "Dr. [Benjamin] Franklin . . . said he would furnish Mr. Gibbon with materials for writing the History of the Decline of the British Empire." A lampoon went the rounds in London during the war. Attributed to Charles James Fox, a dauntless leader of the opposition and staunch friend of the Americans, two verses ran:

King George in a fright
Lest Gibbon should write

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The history of England's disgrace
Thought no way so sure
His pen so secure
As to give the historian a place.

His book well describes
How corruption and bribes
O'erthrew the great empire of Rome;
And his rantings declare
A degeneracy there
Which his conduct exhibits at home.

We do not get wit like that from our politicians now.

Whether in Gibbon's own jest, Franklin's quip, or Fox's lampoon, there is nothing to suggest that the governing class in London could work itself into any great passion over the American war—neither the supporters nor the opponents of the American cause. (Though the consummate and by then aged orator William Pitt, for whom Pittsburgh was named, reinforced his impassioned philippic in defense of the American colonists by collapsing unconscious on the floor of the House at the end.)

WE ALSO KNOW how the American news was received outside London. In December 1775 the daily journal of the Rev. James Woodforde (a country parson in Weston, Norfolk, of ordinary loyalty to the Crown) gave "notice of a Fast being kept on Friday next concerning the present war between America and us." Note that the colonists are not called subjects or rebels, as on the Continent, but *America*, as if they were already a nation. The war then seems to have aroused little interest until there was another official Day of Prayer in 1780, for it was by then clear that God was not pulling his weight. So the good parson "read the proper prayers on the Occasion, but there was no sermon preached. My Squire and Lady at the Church. . . . Sister Clarke, Nancy, Sam and myself all took it into our heads to take a good dose of Rhubarb on going to bed." Rhubarb is an astringent purgative—a very English way of disposing of the news of fresh disasters, rather like taking a "nice cup o' tea" in the Blitz.

In 1781 he recorded the news that "Cornwallis and his whole army . . . are all taken by the Americans and French in Virginia." That is all; not dismay, no commotion, no anger. When it was all over, the news of the Treaty of Versailles was a "joyful" event, though England had suffered a great defeat and lost a vast possession. There remained only the aftermath, an entry as late as December 9, 1785: ". . . to a poor soldier laterly [sic] arrived from America that had been wounded & is now ill gave 1 [shilling] and 6 [pence]"—a neglected veteran of an unpopular, unsuccessful war.

Throughout the war we could have found Horace Walpole at home in London, writing to his friends the letters that now fill 36 volumes in the Yale edition. One of Europe's most intelligent and cultivated men, he chose (happily for us) to be a spectator of great events rather than an actor in them. He returned again and again to the American question, urbane, tart, and outraged. Why are we in America? he asked, as 200 years later he might have asked about Vietnam. "We could even afford to lose America," he wrote as early as March 28, 1774. After Washington's victory at Trenton he wrote: "What politicians are those that have preferred the empty name of *sovereignty* to that of *alliance*! and forced subsidies to the golden age of oceans and commerce." The Americans, he pointed out to a friend, "do not pique themselves upon modern good breeding, but level at the officers, of whom they have slain a vast number." This savage amusement at the fact that the Americans "impertinently" fired on English officers is a wholly accurate reflection of "the amazing heights which pro-Americanism could reach in London," as one researcher found it in even the popular novels of the day. The Boston Tea Party was to him the symbol of English official stupidity: "Mrs. Britannia orders her senate to proclaim America a continent of cowards, and vote it should be starved unless it drink tea with her."

By the end of 1777 Walpole was writing: "We have been horribly the aggressors." A week after the capitulation at Yorktown, but before he had news of it, he proclaimed: "The English in America are as much my countrymen as those born in the parish of St. Martin's in the Field; and when my countrymen quarrel, I think I am free to wish better to the sufferers than to the aggressors; nor can I see how my love of my country obliges me to wish well to what I despise. . . . Were I young and of heroic texture, I would go to America." It is clear from all the evidence that the English people as a whole could not have their hearts in a war against their "countrymen."

BUT THERE WAS one exception to this generally unexcited and unideological response in England, and it is illuminated by the reaction on the Continent. The merchants of the City of London and of other expanding cities of the new middle class in England identified their own interests closely with those of the colonists. The London press, almost without exception, was the voice of this class. With the introduction of the tax on the colonists' trade in molasses and sugar in 1764, the *London Chronicle* at once reported from the west coast port of Bristol, which depended on the American trade, that "the principal merchants of the city intend to support with all their interest the independent free trade of the American colonies." In the numerous and remarkably free English newspapers we can trace how this argument from interest developed steadily into an ideological assertion. As the Americans, during those extraordinary ten years from 1765 to 1775, worked out the philosophical grounds on which they would claim independence, the English merchant class found itself examining and then adopting the same arguments.

In resisting taxation "without representation" by the English Parliament, the Americans (those "grocers") argued that in *English custom* and "natural law" there was a power above Parliament—in short, the Constitution in revolutionary thinking, in the work of the Founding Fathers, and forever afterward in the mind of America. The idea that Parliament was sovereign was then a fairly new development, and there were many at home who objected

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to it, but it was the American colonists who clarified the issue by their dogged resistance. Moreover, the English middle class had its own doubts about the justice of the parliamentary system as it then existed. The Industrial Revolution was reaching its flood, and beyond London many of the rising middle-class cities such as Manchester and Sheffield were not represented at all. So the American cry of "no taxation without representation" drew a strong echo from them.

When the news of the Boston Tea Party reached England, the *London Packet* called such resistance lawful and even honorable against "tyrannic" measures. After Lexington and Concord the *London Evening Post* said that "the prevailing toast in every company of true Englishmen is, 'Victory to the Americans, and re-establishment to the British Constitution.' " (No one was arrested or imprisoned in England for supporting the Americans.) Thus in England as in Europe the American cause had been translated into a universal cause—by a rising class. The American Revolution represented the spontaneously international ideology of this class, which was feeling its strength in Europe, growing assertive in England, and already established in America, even able to organize and arm itself for war.

Of all the dramatic assertions in the Declaration of Independence, none is more "impertinent" than the assurance with which the 13 colonies said they had decided to "assume among the Powers of the Earth, the separate and equal Station" to which they were entitled. Yet the presumption was not as great as it seems. As early as 1765 a correspondent in the *London Magazine* said: "Little doubt can be entertained, that this vast country will in time become the most prosperous empire that perhaps the world has ever seen." This was widely appreciated, and both the English and Europeans were aware of the rapid increase in America's population, and of Franklin's estimate that it would double every 25 years. Shortly after Lexington and Concord the *Chester Chronicle* quoted Bishop Berkeley's poem, "Westward the course of Empire takes its way."

ONCE THE NEWS of the fateful shot reached the courts of Europe, the monarchs were alert to the effect the American rebellion might have on the balance of power in Europe. George III at once dispatched a personal envoy to Catherine the Great, to request fewer than 20,000 Russian troops for help in suppressing the American insurrection. But Catherine did not have a high opinion of George, and refused to supply any soldiers or to make the treaty that Britain wanted. She and her government were extremely well informed about American affairs, and on receiving news of the Declaration, the counselor of the Russian Embassy in London wrote to the Russian foreign minister, N. I. Panin, saying that both it and the prosecution of a formal war against Britain "offer evidence of all the courage of leadership" in America.

King George had no better luck in Vienna. Austria had been allied with France since 1756, but by 1775 it was exhausted by the Seven Years' War, and urgently trying to resist the rise of Prussia in the east under Frederick the Great. Maria Theresa saw that Austria needed to secure its position in the west by friendship with both England and France, and by 1776 wished to revive her earlier friendship with England. In 1777 she wrote to her daughter Marie Antoinette (who had none of her inquiring intelligence or even savvy, and paid the price at the guillotine) that the "war in America" troubled her, as well it might since it pitted France and England against each other. She therefore skillfully maintained Austria's neutrality throughout the war, and forbade both English and American recruiting in Hapsburg lands.

This response of the European monarchs—Denmark also remained neutral, in spite of its alliance with England and its far-flung shipping and trading interests—was the clearest recognition that America had indeed become a new nation on something like equal terms with the oldest and most imperious in the Old World, at once acting and being accepted on the stage of Europe as one of the "Powers of the Earth."

It must be remembered that the enlightened despots were significant figures of the Enlightenment; Catherine corresponded regularly with Voltaire. There was therefore nothing particularly remarkable in the fact that the chief assistant to Panin as the Russian foreign minister was D. I. Fonvizin, whose plays boldly satirized the Russian aristocracy and the institution of serfdom. When Fonvizin traveled through Europe in 1777-78, he met Benjamin Franklin at a *rendez-vous des gens de lettres*, calling him in a letter to his sister "the glorious Franklin." (Franklin wrapped the European intellectuals around his little finger.) Another Russian, commenting on this meeting, wrote: "The representative of the young enlightenment of Russia was an interlocutor with the representative of young America." The excitement at such a meeting demonstrates yet another way in which the new United States, a child of the Enlightenment, impressed itself on Europe as already a mature nation.

THE STORY of how the shot was heard round the world carries obvious instructions. Any notion that the War of Independence was only a rebellion falls to the ground. Both rulers and their subjects saw it as a revolution of universal appeal. The dynamism of that appeal was derived from the fact that the Americans had already built a great trading nation and created not only a strong middle class in the process, but a society that as a whole was middle-class in its temper and energy. What is more, as a result of the preparation between 1765 and 1775—ten of the most creative years in political thinking in the history of the world—the Americans entered the War of Independence with a profound political philosophy that immediately lit fires round the world. They are not yet extinguished.

The names of two unknown villages, Lexington and Concord, became household words even as far as Dubrovnik and St. Petersburg. And on any Fourth of July one cannot help thinking of the few minutemen who took their stand on a bridge and sent the drilled Redcoats running with their tails between their legs back into Boston. □

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Under the Volcano

A World Apart, set in South Africa in 1963 and centered on the struggle against apartheid, is an autobiographical film. Largely. Shawn Slovo, who wrote the screenplay, has changed names of characters, but in a postscript she identifies the woman called Diana Roth as her mother, Ruth First. The daughter, called Molly instead of Shawn, is only one of

A World Apart
(Atlantic)

two central characters. The story is not, as has been said, told entirely from Molly's view: a great deal of the film concerns Diana's actions when away from her daughter. Slovo must have reconstructed those episodes from what her mother either told her or wrote in her book *One Hundred and Seventeen Days* (1965).

The father, Gus Roth—to stick to film names—exits the film right at the start, leaving South Africa on mysterious business. (The actual man, Joe Slovo, is now in Zambia, the only white member of the executive committee of the African National Congress.) The action of the film is double: the struggle of Diana in support of black freedom, which is made even more difficult by a new law that allows the government to detain anyone for 90 days without inquiry; the struggle of the 13-year-old Molly to maintain normal relations with her school chums and with her mother, made more difficult by the latter's imprisonment. Diana's travail is terrible, but in a sense it is simpler than her daughter's. Diana knows who she is and why she is suffering, including her worries about her children. (There are three others, younger than Molly.) Molly doesn't yet know quite who she is or what is happening: the facts are clear to her but not much of their resonance. The basic movement in the story is Molly's growth to some true awareness.

There's nothing really new in this film, but material doesn't have to be new to be moving. The familiar South African battle lines—what else can they be called?—are drawn again. Some attempt is made to deal fairly with the ruling whites: a teacher in Molly's school explains that what we call the Boer War was their war for independence, like the American one; police officials are proud that they are less brutal with a white woman than with other detainees. But the rooted, tragic war grinds on.

Slovo's screenplay has its blemishes. Bits seem left over or left out: coming downstairs from her office with Molly near the start, Diana suddenly says she has forgotten something and goes back up to get it. The return is made to seem important, but that's the end of the sequence. When a pleasant occasion happens, like a black and white celebration or a birthday party for the six-year-old Roth, we know it will be interrupted unpleasantly. Near the end Diana is under strict house arrest, constantly watched, yet she manages to attend a black man's funeral. How? The Roths live in a lovely large house with several servants, yet no mention is made of the source of their money. Diana's job couldn't supply it.

The most disturbing element in the script is its treatment of communism. Several times in the picture, people call the Roths Communists. No reply is ever made, and not one word on the subject is uttered in the privacy of the Roth home. The implication—for American viewers, anyway—is that those name-callers are facile Red-baiters, the sort that every American liberal is only too familiar with, and that the accusation is false. As Slovo handles it, the ignoring of the charge promotes this assumption. The Roths were Communists (see "Uncle Joe: The White Guru of the ANC" by Steven Mufson, TNR, September 28, 1987), and Slovo diminishes their honesty by not having them or their friends say so. From her parents' point of view, it would not be a confession but a full statement of their political selves. Obviously, for commercial reasons, it's better to fudge the matter, but fudging is a sorry business in a film about political agony and martyrdom. (Diana—Ruth First, that is—was killed some years later by a parcel bomb.)

Almost everything in the making of the film is extraordinarily good. (Exception: the music by Hans Zimmer portentously telegraphs drama to come.) *A World Apart* is the first fiction feature directed by Chris Menges, the excellent cinematographer of *The Mission*. Under his hand, Peter Biziou provides perfectly competent camera work, but the welcome surprise is that Menges has concentrated on the acting—with fine results. It's all, solid, confident, strong.

David Suchet, as Diana's chief interrogator in prison, conveys, in the course of his stern questionings, that he is falling a little in love with her. Diana's mother is forcefully played by Yvonne Bryceland, a long-time associate of Athol Fugard and a leading South African actress. Linda Mvusi, the Roths' maid and Molly's darling, is a simple, compassionate black goddess.

Barbara Hershey plays Diana and is phenomenal. The phenomenon has been growing for some time. Her first screen appearances in 1968 were appealing, and in recent years—*Hannah and Her Sisters*, *Hoosiers*, *Tin Men*—she has grown as an actress. Reportedly, her most complex

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Big. Pleasant diversion. Tom Hanks, as a 35-year-old inhabited by the 13-year-old he once was, keeps this soufflé from collapsing. (Reviewed 7/4/88)

A Handful of Dust. That welcome rarity, a beautiful film made from a masterpiece of fiction. Alec Guinness is the best-known in an exceptional cast. (6/27/88)

Rikky and Pete. Amusingly incredible Australian comedy. Heading north from Melbourne, a sister and brother in their 20s get entertainingly embroiled. (6/20/88)

Wings of Desire. Peter Handke's screenplay is the strongest element in this symbolic story of an angel who seeks mortality in Berlin. (5/23/88)

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role was in Konchalovsky's *Shy People*, which has not yet been shown in the United States. It was this performance that led to Diana: Menges was the cinematographer of *Shy People* and wanted no other woman than Hershey for this role.

She has done what is widely held to be impossible for a film actor, untrained in any formal way and confined to what's available in most film and TV scripts: she has become technically adept and, more astonishing, she has greatly deepened. She began in the gelatin-mold Movieland way, picked up by an agent out of a high school production in Hollywood. What ought to have lain ahead of her other than a rerun of the Lana Turner career? But her performance of Diana, especially in the prison sequences, comes from warm understanding and the vigorous, direct means to express it. Never a false move or sound, never a sense of "big scenes." In the late sequences she is afflicted with crude makeup to show her prison sufferings (how could Menges's eye have accepted it?), and she even triumphs over that. Her accent is more British than corkscrew South African, but at least she never loses it.

Jodhi May, the English girl who plays Molly, is irresistible, almost precisely because she seems so resistible at first. Not only is she not particularly pretty, her features lack distinction; she is slightly round-shouldered, and she is given a real mixing-bowl haircut. These very matters become endearing before long, become essential to the Molly that she believes in and creates. The adolescent still has some of the overt dependencies of a child (soon to become covert), and she has enough intelligence to know that her demands are childish even though she can't help making them. As Diana's political convictions lead to separation from her family, Molly begins to resent her mother's choices: to the daughter, those choices imply more concern with activism than with family, a willingness to be separated from them. May gives these angers full body and, with Menges's help, also gives us the blossoming adult beneath them who understands her mother's courage.

The fate of gifted adolescent actors is even more unpredictable than that of gifted adults. Whatever became, for instance, of the marvelous Patricia Gozzi who was in *Sundays and Cybele* and *Rapture* in the early 1960s? I hope that, 20 years from now, the same question won't be asked about Jodhi May. □

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ROBERT BRUSTEIN ON THEATER

Twenty-First Century Hamlet

Ingmar Bergman and the Royal Dramatic Theatre of Sweden (known as the Dramaten) have just left these shores for Japan and the Soviet Union, after appearing at the Brooklyn Academy of Music for little more than a week with their celebrated production of *Hamlet*. Probably because it was performed without simultaneous translation, this Swedish

Hamlet
by William Shakespeare
(Brooklyn Academy of Music)

Hamlet was generally shunned by American theatergoers. What a pity! It is one of the most extraordinary theater events of our time. Bergman has rethought every character, every relationship, every scene, every moment, in exquisite detail. The result is not simply a new approach to the central role that reflects the current style of a generation—the actor-oriented pattern of English Hamlets (Olivier, Burton, Warner, etc.)—but rather a comprehensive original reading of the entire work that prophesies the nightmares of the future. Bergman's *Hamlet* radically alters our understanding of Shakespeare's play without altering its shape, thus vindicating and somehow even purifying the basic tenets of classical reinterpretation.

Paradoxically, this achievement is partly earned by acting the play in Swedish. Those familiar with *Hamlet* would have found the foreign language no obstacle to understanding (Shakespeare himself provides an excellent translation). Indeed, hearing the play performed in another tongue proves an oddly liberating experience. Instead of resonating to the sound of familiar verse passages, which tend to distract you from the line of action, you are permitted to absorb the soul of the tragedy as expressed through its racing plot, psychological relationships, social arrangements, and metaphysical overtones. Shakespeare intended his poetry as a medium, not a fetish. By demystifying the verse, this production makes the play a theatrical rather than a lyrical experience, restoring its intellectual and emotional surprise.

The element of surprise is present from the beginning when the curtain rises on an empty stage to a tacky piano rendering of the Merry Widow waltz. Bergman's setting (designed, along with the costumes, by Göran Wassberg) consists of a thin red circle on the stage floor bisected by a thin red line, a curved bank of arc lights suspended by cables, and a double row of horizontal lights upstage. What sets each scene, apart from a few pieces of furniture, is the arrangement of lighting and lighting equipment—along with the arrangement of equipage. In the first court scene, and in scenes to follow, a chorus of ten masked figures in crimson gowns and gray perukes assumes various sculptural patterns at the back of the stage (sometimes in the same positions as the patterned arc of lights), like a chorus of judges presiding over the action.

Morally, there is much to judge in this excessively sensual and debauched court. Claudius makes his first appearance rolling across the floor with Gertrude, then having her from behind in full view of his red-robed courtiers. After reading Fortinbras's message demanding restoration of Norway's lost lands, Claudius wipes his ass with it ("So much for him"). In the prayer scene, he is cavorting with a besotted hag who turns out to be the aging Player Queen, her lipstick-smeared face fixed in a grotesque stupefied smirk from the strong drink Claudius has poured down her throat (underneath her red wig is a mane of white hair). As played by Börje Ahlstedt, this Claudius is truly a bloat king, his ample exposed belly glistening with sweat, his appetites blatant and voracious.

Hamlet's entrance is accompanied by a scraping noise—he is dragging a bentwood chair on stage—and he continues to scrape at us throughout the play. In black suit, black boatneck shirt, and dark sunglasses, this Hamlet looks like a Grotowski disciple from the Left Bank. He glares at the audience from his chair, a surly, sullen, sulky brat—Hamlet as spoilsport. Peter Stormare enacts a nervous, agitated, entirely unpleasant young man, with no tenderness for anyone but the Ghost and the Player King (both played by the same actor) and for Horatio, who excites his strongest feelings. He is brutal with Ophelia, mauling and almost raping her in the play scene. And he kills Polonius (a bureaucratic diplomat with an omnipresent briefcase) by stabbing him through the left eye behind the arras, then delivering the coup de grace with full knowledge of his victim's identity.

Ophelia is witness to this scene, as she witnesses almost every brutal event in this brutalized court. But this is no consumptive, sensitive suffering plant. As played by Pernilla Östergren (the promiscuous maid of *Fanny and Alexander*), she is a somewhat chunky lass, feisty and argumentative, and, until her father's death, possessed of a strong will. Gertrude gussies her up for Hamlet by rouging her lips and fitting her out with red high heels, pulling down the strap of her slip as an afterthought. Östergren plays her mad scene—in Bergman's hands a powerful study of degenerative female psychosis—in a heavy brocaded gown and marching boots, carrying the bloody handkerchief Polonius used to stanch the wound to his eye. She also carries a dangerous pair of shears, with which she cuts off large tufts of hair, and instead of offering flowers to Gertrude and Claudius, she hands out iron nails. A central character throughout, she even appears at the rainy funeral ceremony that follows her death. The chorus of courtiers, now wearing black morning coats and black beribboned top hats, make a dancing exit carrying black umbrellas. Instead of the usual chiaroscuro, a harsh light illuminates the entire stage area, including pipes and exit signs. And Ophelia materializes at the back, in bare feet, blue slip, and flowered crown—the way she first appeared—now a ghost haunting her own burial service.

Every scene astonishes, every character is fresh. The Gravedigger is the top banana of a vaudeville show, equipped with bowler hat and bulbous nose, his song accompanied by two musicians on sax and trombone. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Tweedledee and Tweedledum—distinguished only by Rosencrantz's dueling scar—dressed in identical orange suits and wielding identical canes. Gertrude is a lustful matron with dyed red hair, Horatio a golden-headed wag, Osric the successor of Polonius as windy court diplomat. As for the Ghost, he is a confused, ineffectual old dear, gliding along the floor in an oversize white robe.

There are, by the way, virtually no soliloquies in this production. Hamlet's "To be or not to be" is addressed to the Player King (a sympathetic surrogate father);

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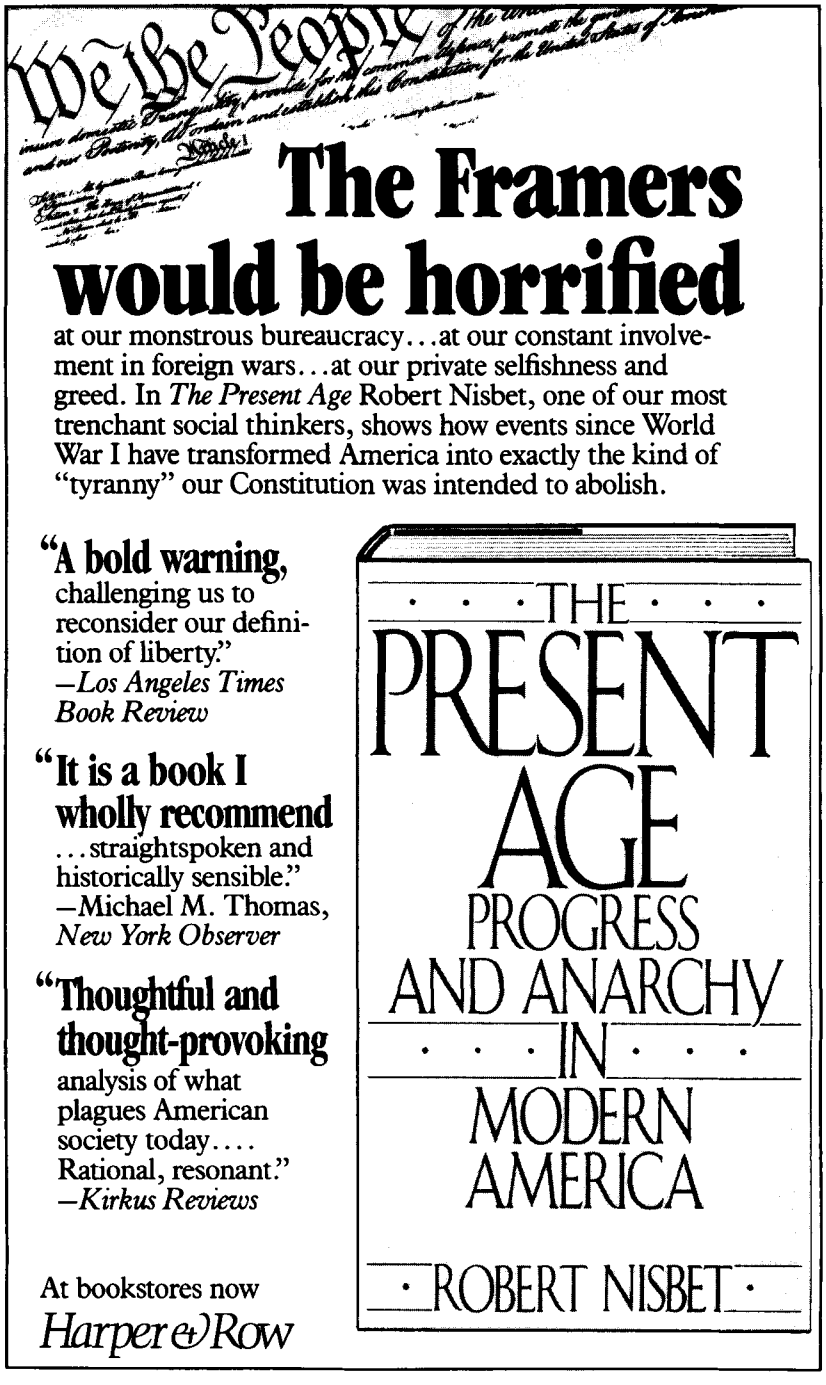
Claudius's "My offense is rank" is a soggy confession uttered near the supine body of his passed-out concubine; Horatio reads Hamlet's letter before the entire court. There are no secrets in this public world, since everyone is either too feverish or too desperate to fear disclosure.

THE FINAL SCENE turns this public world into a global village and, in a stunning coup de theatre, launches the play into a new dimension. Having watched the armies of Fortinbras contending for a tiny patch of ground, Hamlet has tardily resolved to take his revenge upon the man who took his father's life and wife and crown (he scrawls "BLOD" in chalk graffiti on the stage right wing leg). Hamlet's growing maturity is marked by signs of physical deterioration (Stormare is pale and sallow in the last moments of the play), but also by his ability to develop a genuine human connection—with Horatio. Yet even this relationship cannot help him circumvent catastrophe. In a marvelously staged duel scene, he is scratched in the arm with the poisoned rapier, exchanges weapons, and stabs Laertes through the neck. He is too weak now to kill Claudius, and the King contemptuously pushes his thrust away. The Ghost enters and clutches Claudius around the waist long enough for Hamlet to run him through.

Then comes the scene that focuses and resolves Bergman's concept, with the entrance of Fortinbras following Hamlet's death. The action thus far has occurred in an unknown European country during an indeterminate period. Now we are in very familiar territory. Outfitted like a Central American military leader in beret and jackboots, and accompanied by soldiers wearing black riot helmets and brandishing machine guns, Fortinbras marches on stage to the earsplitting sound of rock music emanating from a ghetto blaster. Surveying the carnage, he orders his soldiers to pitch the bodies of Claudius, Gertrude, and Laertes into a pit, then signals for Horatio to be led off and shot. "Four captains" of this totalitarian brigade bear Hamlet's body "to the stage"—the stage on which the players performed before the King. Fortinbras's last lines are a media speech orated in front of klieg lights, a handheld video camera, and a microphone. "Go bid the soldiers shoot" is followed by shatteringly loud bursts of machine-gun fire.

It is a scene of fierce intensity that reverberates from your toenails to the tips of your hair, and it helps to reinvent the meaning of catharsis for our time. This *Hamlet* is true to the age in evoking a lot more terror than pity, but the cathartic manifestations are the same—shock, tremors, thrills, and welling emotion. Through terror, Bergman uses Shakespeare's play to dramatize the Second Coming (Shakespeare himself predicted slouching beasts in characters like Iago and Edmund and plays like *King Lear*), but piercing the barbarous gloom is the gentle softening light of Ophelia. The production is not very rich in memorable performances—Stormare is hardly a definitive Hamlet. Yet by focusing attention on the arc of the action rather than on virtuoso acting, it demonstrates something perhaps more important—how a unified company working under the most deliberate rehearsal conditions can fulfill the inspired vision of a brilliant director.

We are told that Bergman's *Hamlet* was rejected by the First International New York Festival of the Arts because it failed to qualify as a "20th-century" production. Absurd as that sounds, it is accurate in a way the festival hardly intended. For Bergman's *Hamlet* is the first production of the 21st century—a daring probe into tone, mood, and theatrical techniques of the future. Let us hope it is not an accurate view of the political future as well. □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Hollywood's visions of Vietnam.

THE ROAD TO RAMBO III

BY MARTHA BAYLES

HE'S BACK: that Commie-hating hunk, that successor to the Duke, that tank killer in a tank top. Despite demonstrations against *Rambo III* by such groups as Jerry Rubin's Alliance for Survival, Rambo doesn't seem to be upsetting—or attracting—as many people as he did the last time around. Some cite *glasnost* and the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan as the reason for our indifference to the sight of Sylvester Stallone blasting away at the Red army. But here's another suggestion. Back in 1984, *Rambo: First Blood Part II* (a.k.a. *Rambo II*) showed His Pecs rescuing several American POWs from a Communist prison camp inside Vietnamese-controlled Cambodia. Whereas *Rambo III* sends its hero into someone else's war, *Rambo II* sends him into bitter memories of our own.

Yet when it comes to making films about the Vietnam War, John Rambo is strictly a Johnny-come-lately. Stallone's main talent is for caricaturing, in distinctively gigantesque style, themes already developed by a wide assortment of other filmmakers. As their titles suggest, the two earliest Vietnam films use a single representative character—a prototypical American—to embody the pros and cons of U.S. policy. In *The Quiet American* (1958), adapted from the novel by Graham Greene, a starry-eyed American comes to a bad end because he insists on believing in a democratic "Third Force." In *The Ugly American* (1963), it's the other way around: the American ambassador's refusal to believe in a Third Force causes its leader to come to a bad end. Both films place more emphasis on analysis than action, which sets them apart from the almost exclusive focus on combat seen in last year's crop, including such films as *Platoon*. They are also distinguished by their sincerity and objectivity, qualities rarely seen again in the 30-year record of films about Vietnam.

The Ugly American ends with the ambassador's contrite image on a stateside TV screen, pleading with his countrymen to . . . what? We never learn, because the screen goes blank, switched off by a bored viewer. This ending is prophetic, for as America's military involvement escalated over the next five years, the silver screen might as well have stayed blank. And when the war did reappear, it was not in films grappling earnestly with the rights and wrongs of U.S. policy. Instead, the two Vietnam films that were released during the conflict reflect only the tortured polarization of the times.

At one extreme is the countercultural hipness of *M*A*S*H* (1970), a film ostensibly set in an Army field hospital in Korea but widely interpreted as a black comedy about Vietnam. Because the plot is obsessed not with war, but with impotence, homophobia, misogyny, and sexual humiliation of any character expressing patriotic or religious motives, a better interpretation would be that *M*A*S*H* is a compulsive display of virility on the part of director Robert Altman and stars Elliott Gould and Donald Sutherland at a time when other men were fighting and dying.

At the opposite extreme are the straight-ahead heroics of *The Green Berets*, a film promised by John Wayne to the troops in 1966, set in the confident days of 1963, fashioned in the style of 1949, and lobbed like a grenade into 1968. The public loved it, the critics hated it, and the GIs mocked its many incongruities—such as the Viet Cong attacking in formation, a VC general swilling champagne in a lavish private mansion, the heroes escaping into the jungle via limousine, and a sun setting in the east. Today, the best that can be said of *The Green Berets* is that anyone who watches it in a double bill with *M*A*S*H* will be permanently cured of late-1960s nostalgia.

Stallone is frequently regarded as the Duke's heir in the much praised, much damned work of inspiring young men to march off to war. Yet in crucial respects, the two celluloid warriors couldn't be more different. All of Wayne's movies, including the klutzy *Green Berets*, link military heroism with teamwork and comradeship, whereas the most cartoonish aspect of the Rambo films is their emphasis on solo superheroics. This cartoonishness earns the disdain of veterans. As one former Marine of my acquaintance put it: "Rambo never sees his buddies blown away because he never has any." A similar disdain may have been felt by Ted Kotcheff, director of the original Rambo film (*First Blood*, 1982), because he did not go on to direct *Rambo II*.

Instead, Kotcheff made his own, more realistic rescue film. *Uncommon Valor* (1983) stars Gene Hackman as a retired Marine colonel who returns to Vietnam after the war to rescue his POW son. Instead of a single cartoon hero, it features a squad of uncartoonish veterans who suffer uncartoonish casualties. And unlike most Vietnam films, it achieves some of the heady patriotic excitement of Wayne's classic World War II movies—an excitement Wayne himself fails to achieve in *The Green Berets*, for the simple reason that its upbeat heroics appear fatuous in the context of the war's disastrous outcome. The key to not appearing fatuous is, of course, to end in victory. And that's exactly what *Uncommon Valor* does. The colonel doesn't find his son, but several other POWs are rescued, and the survivors return to a hero's welcome.

Upbeat heroics under the banner of surrogate victory are also attempted in last year's *The Hanoi Hilton*, a film that instead of being factually incongruous is factually scrupulous—to a fault. Imagine the only pro-war professor on an anti-war campus giving a seminar on North Vietnam's Nguoi Chien Thang prison, and you'll get an idea of how thorough—and how thoroughly undramatic—*The Hanoi Hilton* is. Writer/director Lionel Chetwynd painstakingly includes every aspect of prison life, every purpose the POWs were meant to serve, and every influence their captors wielded over the media and the peace movement. The unfortunate result is an episodic saga in which every character (major or minor) and every event (profound or trivial) is given equal weight.

Moreover, *The Hanoi Hilton* is so eager to assert surrogate victory—that is, the fact that most American POWs bravely outlasted their captors—that it denies defeat. Toward the end, there's some dialogue about social upheavals at home; and in a scene denounced by former doves as strenuously as it was defended

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by former hawks, the POWs' ordeal is belittled by a left-wing British journalist and a visiting celebrity who resembles Jane Fonda. But the dark reality of American failure in Vietnam is otherwise suppressed—with the predictable result that the heroes' upbeat posturing appears (you guessed it) fatuous.

EVEN IF one supports the ideals for which the Vietnam War was undertaken, the straight-ahead John Wayne approach can't do the topic justice, because it blithely assumes the inevitable triumph of American idealism and technique. A better approach would be to acknowledge the idealism of the cause, but also to face the reality of failure and defeat. It's a cliché to call the Vietnam War a tragedy, if by tragedy we mean a blow of fate such as an earthquake. But fate is only one aspect of tragedy. The cliché speaks volumes if we recall the rest of its classic definition: tragedy strikes characters who are powerful, noble, and virtuous; tragedy shows lofty aims brought low by arrogance, error, even virtue itself; tragedy mourns rather than celebrates the downfall of the mighty.

Humaneness is a self-proclaimed American virtue. Yet one of the tragic ironies of the Vietnam War was that our efforts to wage it "humanely" resulted in a series of half-measures that, it can be argued, only prolonged the agony. The brooding figure of Rambo is a walking embodiment of this irony—which is why, for all his cartoonishness, he is not smug. Stallone taps popular patriotism, but he also taps darker emotions, such as the resentment many veterans feel toward their government for not waging war against North Vietnam to the hilt, and toward their countrymen for ridiculing or ignoring their sacrifices. Asked in *Rambo II* if he hates his country, Rambo snaps, "Hate it! I'd die for it!" But he also growls, "Sir, do we get to win this time?"

Here Stallone clearly caricatures a theme developed by others. After a hiatus that lasted through the end of the war, Vietnam reappeared in the late 1970s as a background for psychologically troubled characters. In *Heroes* (1977), Henry Winkler plays a cute, gentle vet struggling to open his battle-scarred heart to his girl (Sally Field). Given the feminist mood of the '70s, *Heroes* was not copied until 1985, when Don Johnson plays a similar role in the less cute, but also less affecting, *Cease Fire*. But beyond these minor efforts, few cinematic vets

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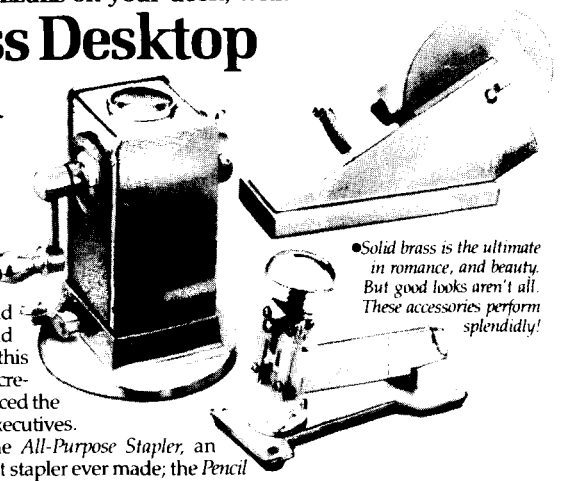

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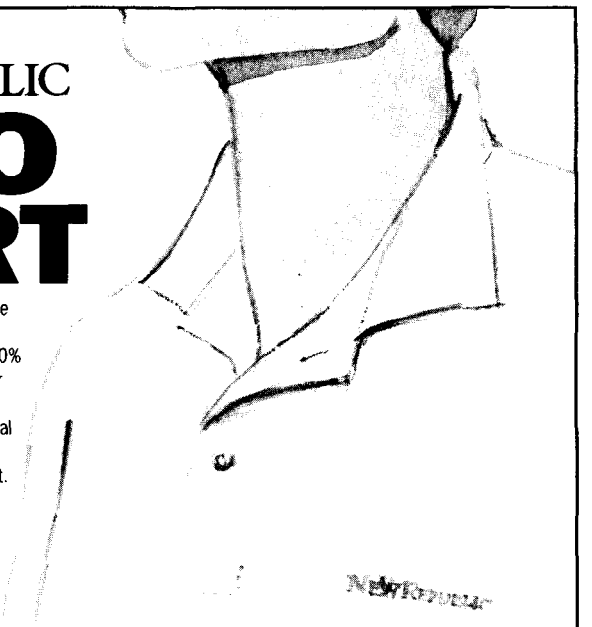

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have used a good woman's love as therapy.

What they have used is violence. Enter the not-so-gentle vet: in *Taxi Driver* (1976), a disturbed veteran conducts a psychopath's covert war against New York City. In *Rolling Thunder* (1977), two recently released POWs unleash their pent-up wrath in a ferocious act of vengeance. In *The Ninth Configuration* (1979), an officer driven crazy by the carnage he committed in Vietnam commits similar carnage on a vile gang of bikers. Combat soldiers in Vietnam used the word "payback" to describe the frighteningly intense pleasure derived from deeds of violent retribution. It is significant that the initial targets of cinematic payback were not Viet Cong or North Vietnamese combatants, but decadent civilians portrayed as having been screwing around at home while better men were off risking their lives. Stallone follows this pattern in *First Blood* when the bitter and isolated Rambo cuisinarts a batch of backwoods vet-baiters.

AT THEIR BEST, the payback films evoke intense rage, pity, and fear—the emotional component of tragedy, or catharsis. But aside from occasional mutterings that carry a freight of implied grievance, they don't address the larger aims of the Vietnam War, or the reasons why it went wrong—the moral component of tragedy. For the first serious attempts to combine emotional catharsis with moral analysis, we must turn to a cluster of four films, two famous and two obscure, that were released in 1978.

That year's Oscars were swept by *Coming Home* and *The Deer Hunter*, still renowned milestones in the post-Vietnam "healing process." Yet it is striking how neatly both films sidestep the actual war. *Coming Home* is set in California, with Jane Fonda as a woman torn between her gentle vet lover (Jon Voight) and her not-so-gentle vet husband (Bruce Dern)—neither of whom has much to say about his experience of the war. The much superior *The Deer Hunter* begins with a fond portrait of a Pennsylvania steel town—embellished, just a bit, by the presence of the Rocky Mountains. Greater embellishment follows, as three hometown lads (Robert De Niro, John Savage, and Christopher Walken) ship out for a Vietnam tour that consists of being captured, held in vermin-infested tiger cages, and forced to play Russian roulette. More vividly than the innuendos of *Coming Home*, these surrealistic scenes evoke the terror of being victimized. But they sidestep the other, perhaps graver terror of war, that of victimizing others. No wonder the jukebox keeps playing "Too Good To Be True."

MORE DETAILED scrutiny of the war is found in the obscure pair of 1978 films. *Go Tell the Spartans* stars Burt Lancaster as an advisory commander struggling in 1964 to adapt strict by-the-book procedures to dangerously fluctuating events. *The Boys in Company C* follows a unit of Marines from boot camp to the beginning of Tet. The fact that the former was released during a New York newspaper strike only partly explains why both got short shrift from the critics. Typical was Janet Maslin's put-down of *The Boys in Company C* in the *New York Times*: "There's no real evidence of the troubled political climate of 1967. . . . As far as the screenplay is concerned, this might as well be World War II."

Evidently Maslin saw no timeliness in scenes of rival officers quarreling during a firefight; a hippie draftee shooting a corrupt ARVN colonel; a black soldier assuming leadership of an all-white unit after helping his redneck buddy kick drugs; or a troubled recruit throwing himself on a grenade after writing in his notebook that "living has got to be more important than winning." By grimly anticipating defeat, due to a top-heavy, bureaucratized command structure that chronically underestimated the enemy, both films hark back to the earnestly critical tone of *The Quiet American* and *The Ugly American*. Yet they were accused of being smug, World War II-style throwbacks like *The Green Berets*. Why?

The most obvious answer is that most critics hated the Vietnam War so much that they scorned any attempt to place it within the bounds of recognizable human experience. They preferred the verbal vagueness of *Coming Home* or the surrealistic horror of *The Deer Hunter* to the mixture of mundane horror with military routine—and worse, military humor—portrayed by the less-renowned films. To admit that the latter were serious attempts to dramatize the failures of the war would have required the critics to admit it had been fought by well-intentioned mortals like themselves.

Yet artistically, the critics had a point. Vietnam was traumatic for many Americans not just because they were unaccustomed to extremes of hardship and danger, but also because the conditions of the war placed those extremes in unsettling proximity to "normal" comfort and safety. Very often callow teenagers were shuttled in and out of hellish situations without time to adjust psychologically. Although *Go Tell the Spartans* and *The Boys in Company C* allude to the disorienting craziness, they don't make the audience feel it.

QUITE A CONTRAST with *Apocalypse Now* (1979), Francis Ford Coppola's notorious evocation of Vietnam's particular madness. While heading north on a secret mission, the stressed-out Captain Willard (Martin Sheen) meets a lunatic officer (Robert Duvall) who sports horse cavalry gear while incinerating a village so his troops can go surfing. But this is bush-league bedlam compared with Willard's objective, the Cambodian jungle stronghold of a renegade colonel named Kurtz (Marlon Brando), whom the Army considers insane and wants Willard to "terminate with extreme prejudice."

Yet Kurtz turns out to be not a raving maniac but a warrior spirit who rejects America's restraint as bitterly as he praises the enemy's ruthlessness. Overdosed on horror, he is obsessed with the enemy's capacity to commit atrocities "without feeling, without passion, without judgment. . . . Because it's judgment that defeats us." The critic George Szamuely suggested recently that these lines reveal something not revealed in most Vietnam films—the true face of North Vietnamese communism. By this light, *Apocalypse Now* can be said to show the downfall of a great nation too civilized to prevail against a smaller but more barbarous enemy.

Yet this interpretation overlooks the film's ultimate message. Despite being awed by Kurtz, Willard carries out his bloody mission, only to find vindication in a scrawled note on Kurtz's desk: "Drop The Bomb Exterminate Them All!" Along with the figure of Kurtz, Coppola borrows from Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* the notion that civilization is not an alternative to evil, only a veil over its dread gaze. By this light, the message turns pacifist: in war, there can exist no middle ground between agonizing half-measures and total annihilation.

For a long time, *Apocalypse Now* stood as the only tragic Vietnam film, because it was the only one that combined emotional catharsis (the lunacy of the war) with moral analysis (the nature of the enemy). Then in 1984, another film succeeded in presenting a serious image of

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the force the United States was struggling to contain in Southeast Asia. *The Killing Fields*, based on the true story of *New York Times* correspondent Sydney Schanberg and his Cambodian interpreter, Dith Pran, during Pol Pot's 1975 takeover, is still unique in linking barbarism with Communist ideology. The scenes depicting the imprisonment and forced "re-education" of Dith Pran (Haing S. Ngor) at the hands of the Khmer Rouge are truly horrific. But someone must have re-educated the director, Roland Jaffe, because the film also endorses the opinion, expressed by the guilt-ridden Schanberg (Sam Waterston), that it was not communism but American bombing that precipitated the Cambodian genocide.

AT THE END, when Schanberg and Dith Pran are reunited, these contradictory views cry out for resolution. But the two men's words are drowned out by—believe it or not—a golden oldie, John Lennon singing "Imagine." Here we see the 1980s alternative to tragedy: Why bother with a difficult moral resolution when you can put together a terrific soundtrack? Back in 1978, Vincent Canby objected to all the rock songs in *Coming Home* by writing that the director "poured music over the movie like a child with a fondness for maple syrup on his pancakes." But nowadays, few question the propriety of presenting the Vietnam War as a music video.

For example, last year's *Good Morning, Vietnam* is almost all maple syrup—i.e., hilarious patter and fabulous platters spun by an Armed Forces Radio DJ named Adrian Cronauer (Robin Williams). As for the pancake—i.e., the war—it gets reduced to a misunderstanding between fresh-faced American boys and sweet-faced Vietnamese families (whose charm is positively correlated with loyalty to the VC). The wacky Cronauer is instantly popular with both sides, because he represents the very best America has to offer in 1965: not freedom, not democracy, but rock 'n' roll. Once again, Hollywood personifies the nation in a representative character, only instead of *The Quiet American* or *The Ugly American*, it's The Rockin' American.

Teenagers may fall for the music video approach, but grown-up critics should know better. Those who denounce the right-wing cartoonishness of the Rambo movies ought to take another look at the left-wing cartoonishness of such esteemed films as last year's Oscar-winning *Platoon*, given artificial depth by director Oliver Stone's skillful use of music, especially some intensely wrought Motown hits and—for the highbrows—Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings*.

There's no denying Stone's technical mastery as he rams us into a foxhole with bloodsucking insects and earsplitting bombs. But morally, he manipulates us with a cartoonish battle between two sergeants, brutal Barnes (Tom Berenger) and elegant Elias (William Dafoe), for the soul of a tender cherry named Chris (Charlie Sheen). Both sergeants are combatants—this is war, guys. But how tidily Stone divides up the labor. Nasty jobs, like interrogating villagers, go to Barnes, with Elias off nurturing young soldiers or fertilizing his marijuana plants. Graceful heroics, like darting through the greenwood picking off uniformed NVA, go to Elias, while Barnes plots Elias's cold-blooded murder. And how tidily the melodrama ends. The command post is overrun, and Chris—ravaged by battle but still grieving for Elias—shoots the already dying Barnes.

This execution scene possesses none of the tragic intensity of the scene in *Apocalypse Now* when Willard cuts down the eloquent Kurtz. The reason is simple: *Platoon* acknowledges no greater enemy than Barnes. None of its characters have two words to say about communism, until Chris's final statement, as high-minded as Mulholland Drive, that "we did not fight the enemy, we fought ourselves—and the enemy was in us." Stone's own published view is that "we were destined to lose because this war had no moral purpose and it was fought without any moral integrity."

HOLLYWOOD HAS always been to the left of the mainstream, but it's breathtaking that Stone can make such a radically anti-American statement while taking credit for restoring the heroic image of Vietnam veterans. It's a devilishly clever trick, made possible by a formula—already being adopted by TV producers—that focuses narrowly on the emotional bonds between fighting men while disparaging the cause for which they are fighting as evil or absurd.

This formula claims justification in the sociological finding that soldiers in combat fight more for each other than for overarching goals or ideals. But it stretches this finding for what is essentially a political purpose. A left-wing cartoonist like Stone can have his anti-war

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cake and eat it too—simply by conflating two different kinds of disillusionment. First is the feeling, widespread in the military and in mainstream America, that the *strategy* of the Vietnam War was wrong. Second is the feeling, widespread in Hollywood, that *any* strategy would have been wrong, because America was—and is—wrong to use force to oppose communism. By skillful sleight of hand, a film like *Platoon* can make lines expressing the first (the war-weary cynicism of grunts) read as if they also expressed the second (radical anti-Americanism).

The same neat trick is attempted—less successfully—in last year's *Full Metal Jacket*, Stanley Kubrick's film based on *The Short-Timers*, a novel by Gustav Hasford (who co-wrote the script with Kubrick and Michael Herr). It begins with a particularly grim vision of boot camp as a course in pure sadism. Then the scene shifts to Vietnam, the ruined city of Hue during Tet (brilliantly re-created in a semi-demolished part of London), where, on their first patrol, the new recruits find themselves being drawn into deadly sniper fire. When Cowboy, the best friend of the witty protagonist, Private Joker (Matthew Modine), gets killed, the unit hunts down the sniper, who turns out to be a girl. Fatally wounded, she begs Joker to shoot her, which, after hesitating, he does. The others title him "hard core," and off they hump through the brilliant firelit rubble, singing the Mickey Mouse Club song.

Hard core compared with John Wayne, the constant butt of Joker's jokes. But *Full Metal Jacket* is soft compared with *The Short-Timers*, a book that makes no pretense whatsoever to mixing its anti-war passion with heroism. Both the film and the novel start out on a cynical note, but while *The Short-Timers* deepens that note to blackest nihilism, *Full Metal Jacket* merely sustains it—and worse, tries to add to it the audience-pleasing sound of a bugle. Take the death of Cowboy. In *The Short-Timers*, he is shot not by the female sniper (who appears earlier), but by a different sniper in a climactic jungle scene. While he writhes in a clearing among several dead comrades, the rest of the unit feels bound by Marine tradition to retrieve him. But Joker decides it's not worth it and wastes Cowboy himself—an act fully in keeping with the novel's message that "spilled guts" is not the true ugliness of war: "To see human beings clearly, that is ugly."

In *Full Metal Jacket*, by contrast, the tradition of the Corps is upheld as Cowboy dies in the arms of Joker and five other stalwarts who have just traversed hell to reach his side. If Kubrick calculated that movie audiences won't like seeing a Marine save his own skin by blowing out his best buddy's brains, then more box-office power to him. But he shouldn't then brag to *Rolling Stone* that instead of "giving [the audience] something to make them a little happier," he believes in "putting in something that is inherently true to the material."

By presenting heroism in a radically anti-war context, both *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket* shrink the moral component of the Vietnam tragedy to the unproblematic morality of buddy helping buddy. But is military comradeship really so unproblematic? In *The Hanoi Hilton*, a condemned POW who feels forgotten by America says, "I die not for love of country but of countrymen." In such a pro-war film, we assume a vital link between the two and expect rescue to revive this man's patriotism. In the anti-war films of Stone and Kubrick, however, we are asked to assume that soldiers die for each other not because they are countrymen, but simply because they are men. Yet the lesson of *The Short-Timers* is precisely that the horror of war spiraling down into defeat can replace comradeship with selfishness.

IT'S NOT surprising that no commercial film has ever dramatized this ultimate degradation of war. But it is surprising, and regrettable, that a film that successfully combines the various ingredients of the Vietnam tragedy has been lumped together with *Platoon* and *Full Metal Jacket*. By reputation, last year's *Hamburger Hill* is just one more Vietnam movie drumming up sympathy for the soldiers while using graphic violence to drive home an anti-war message. Or thus most reviewers concluded after noting that the film focuses on the war's most famous Pyrrhic victory, the all-too-temporary conquest of Hill 937 in May 1969; and that its exhausted characters keep repeating the bleak line: "It don't mean nothin'."

But *Hamburger Hill* contains a far finer sense of tragedy than either of its competitors. For one thing, it admits the vital link between fighting for countrymen and fighting for country. Aside from *The Hanoi Hilton*, this is the only one of last year's films in which soldiers express bitterness about the lack of support from home. Burnt-out Sergeant Frantz (Dylan McDermott) never utters a word justifying the hell his unit is going through. But on the other hand, he gets furious whenever a noncombatant mocks, or even questions, the war's strategy or purpose. In Frantz's view, the only ones with a right to mock are his men, because they've paid their dues. For them, any irreverence is allowed if it eases pain.

It is widely agreed that the final assault on Hill 937 was a tactical disaster that reflected, all too well, the strategic disaster of the war. It's clear that the grunts in *Hamburger Hill* hate the orders they have been given. But aside from the partly ironic racial rhetoric of the equally burnt-out black medic, the film contains no hatred, implicit or explicit, of either America or the goals for which the war was supposedly being fought.

THE DREAM

Once, years after your death, I dreamt
you were alive and that I'd found you
living once more in the old apartment.
But I had taken a woman up there
to make love to in the empty rooms.
I was angry at you who'd borne and loved me
and because of whom I believe in heaven.
I regretted your return from the dead
and said to myself almost bitterly,
"For godsakes, what was the big rush,
couldn't she wait one more day?"

And just so, daily somewhere Messiah
is shunned like a beggar at the door because
someone has something he wants to finish
or just something better to do, something
he prefers not to put off forever
—little pleasures so deeply wished
that Heaven's coming has to seem bad luck
or worse, God's intruding selfishness!

But you always turned Messiah away
with a penny and a cake for his trouble
—because wash had to be done, because
who could let dinner boil over and burn,
because everything had to be festive for
your husband, your daughters, your son.

IRVING FELDMAN

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Thus *Hamburger Hill* unravels Stone's and Kubrick's clever trick. As the men keep slogging upward, they keep repeating that line—"It don't mean nothin' "—which the reviews took as a condemnation of the war. The reviews were wrong, because this line is never applied to the war's purpose or strategy, only to its horrors: a man blown apart on the last week of his tour; a protester throwing dog feces; a friend's entrails bursting out of his body. By telling themselves that these things "don't mean nothin'," the soldiers stifle emotion and keep on slogging. The line isn't despair—the goal of men trying to fashion arty condemnations of war. It's a fending off of despair—the goal of men trying to keep from being engulfed. The grunts repeat it ritually because it is their only link, in extremis, with larger purposes, moral values, and sanity.

The best moment in *Hamburger Hill* is the end, when the platoon's four survivors find each other on the hilltop and wordlessly share a canteen. A blue-eyed private wordlessly washes Sergeant Frantz's filthy face, then walks to the crest of the hill to gaze down at the blasted slope. His blue eyes fill, but the scene is redeemed from sentimentality by its silence. Or rather by its lack of string crescendos, high-minded anti-war pronouncements, and 1960s rock ballads. All we hear are the distant throbbing of a helicopter, the crackling of a radio, and (most of all) the wind.

This silence reveals the essential difference between *Hamburger Hill*'s delicate balance of heroism and despair, and the way Stone's and Kubrick's films collapse the two into a simplistic anti-war statement. One of the least attractive aspects of those films is their wielding of the horror of war as a means of destroying the attachment of American soldiers to the stated ideals of their country. Let's hope that like *Hamburger Hill*, the next Vietnam film finds a way to scale the rough moral terrain of the Vietnam tragedy, while also bringing us the kind of catharsis we need—the kind that lets us hear ourselves think.

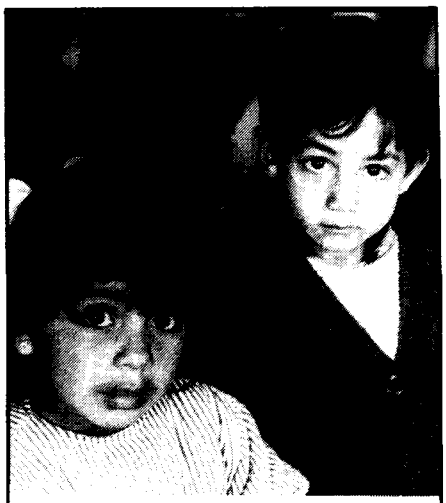
MEDIUM COOL

Letters of Marshall McLuhan selected and edited by Matie Molinaro, Corrine McLuhan, William Toye

(Oxford University Press, 562 pp., $30)

An edition of Marshall McLuhan's letters may seem unnecessary, a project more appropriate to one of Kingsley Amis's beleaguered assistant professors than to a major publishing house. Not only does the flamboyant apologist for multimedia exchange look surprisingly tame as an 18th-century "man of letters." It is hard to imagine that anyone still cares about McLuhan—or even remembers him. The very idea of a professor-prophet lecturing the industrial complex strikes us today as faintly ridiculous. McLuhan's readings of comic strips and magazine ads, his history of the evolution of technology, his classifications of media all seem far from anything we now want to know. Yet McLuhan may be less irrelevant than he at first appears. Whatever his relation to an unfashionable '60s rhetoric of excess, McLuhan stands at the beginning of a shift in cultural criticism that we are only beginning to understand. His successes, and failures, reflect in telling ways on our current preoccupation with theory.

Not that the letters are in themselves very interesting. The early pages cover McLuhan's student years in Canada and England and his first teaching positions at the University of Wisconsin and St. Louis University. As in all collections, such juvenilia mean to signal a greatness to come. Yet little of the mature McLuhan can be discerned in the commonplace opinions of the undergraduate, and his teaching experience only tells us what we already know about the tedium of grading papers and of academic politics. A Freudian might discover in McLuhan's relation to his mother or early conversion to Catholicism seeds of his later theory of popular culture. But



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in general these early statements are interesting only for gossip about McLuhan's famous teachers and friends—G. K. Chesterton, Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis, I. A. Richards.

With his appointment in 1946 to St. Michael's College, University of Toronto, McLuhan moved into more characteristic territory. Building on his early academic studies of Eliot, Pound, and the French Symbolist poets, he began to relate modernist notions of "landscape" and "symbol" to the general use of images in advertising and the media. This project led to the publication in 1951 of *The Mechanical Bride* and in the 1960s of *The Gutenberg Galaxy* and *Understanding Media*, the three volumes that most successfully articulate his theory of form and content in the electronic age. The letters of this period document the growth of these ideas and, after the popular triumph of *Understanding Media*, of McLuhan's celebrity status as prophet of the television generation.

Throughout these interconnected books, McLuhan focused on the place of a text in its culture, and especially on the effect of changes in our modes of communication. His terms for defining this cultural environment varied: written vs. oral, hot vs. cool, medium vs. message, visual vs. acoustic, center vs. margin, figure vs. ground, environment vs. anti-environment, even right brain vs. left brain. But the point remained basically the same. Every particular experience must be treated as much in terms of the kind of experience it is as for what it says: the form of a message is more fully its "content" than any explicit message being conveyed. In his hands, the front page of a newspaper was less a source of news than a visual icon, a mosaic collage. And the differences between television and radio become so great as to make any experience of television essentially the same as any other, whether one was watching "Three's Company" or the "MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour."

In *The Gutenberg Galaxy*, McLuhan described man's technological environments in historical terms. Illiterate tribal man communicated solely through speech, or somewhat later through a highly visual pictographic writing. The phonetic alphabet, by representing objects in terms of non-pictorial letters and words, divorced sights and sounds from their meanings. The resulting dissociation of sensibility experienced by literate man was compounded in the "Gutenberg galaxy," where the invention of movable type fostered feelings of isolation, linearity, finally of fragmentation. Only with the current age, the speed of whose electronic communication linked all cultures in a single network, did this sensory dislocation give way to a renewed organicism and global tribalism. *Understanding Media* superimposed on this history of the four ages of technology an analysis of media types. By redefining media as any "extension" of man, from his skin through his words to his weapons, McLuhan classified each individual medium, and especially modern ones like comics, ads, movies, and television, as either hot or cool. A medium was hot if it relayed a high degree of information; cool if it relayed less information. The phonetic alphabet was hot, as were movies and radio. Ideograms, cartoons, and television were cool.

It is easy enough to shoot holes in the specifics of this theory. McLuhan's historical overview wasted little time on exact observation of verifiable events. The shifting terminology and McLuhan's penchant for the easy paradox compounded the imprecision of his historical categories. The hot/cool distinction seemed particularly arbitrary. Television was cool because of the low resolution of its image, radio hot because it offered constant information. But in terms of the technical quality of its signal, the sound wave of radio, whatever its content, was as "cool" as the television image. Nor was McLuhan consistent in delineating the virtues of each. The greater technological sophistication of the hot medium seemed to make it superior. At the same time a cool medium, in giving so little, required the audience to fill in the gaps. It was therefore more involving than a hot medium, which was already comparatively complete, not to say "cold."

McLuhan's mature letters do not explain these ambiguities but only reproduce them. Written (and finally dictated) with increasing haste, they repeat often verbatim the familiar formulations without clarifying the intellectual point. The notorious terminology—of "extensions" and "tribalism" and "global village"—proliferates, until one is tempted to cry, along with one correspondent, "I really don't know what you are talking about." To the extent that the letters expose the seams in McLuhan's patchwork, they only reinforce suspicions about his sloppiness. Every new discovery is presented to the public as a long-standing belief. In generating his famous

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catchphrases, McLuhan misunderstands, even misquotes, his sources. After almost 400 pages, he comes to seem less a student of '60s rhetoric than an embodiment of it—as much a cultural relic as the "streaker" he analyzes.

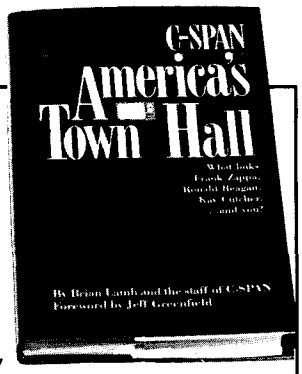
But if McLuhan's approach seems unacceptable, his conclusions are in fact strikingly similar to those of recent Continental theorists. McLuhan's vocabulary was largely drawn from the social sciences, and theirs from modern linguistics and semiology. Yet the basic insights are the same. Both work to overturn a notion of communication as a mechanical transfer of meaning from an author to a reader, by detailing the ways in which author, meaning, and audience are altered by their participation in the process. Both locate at the center of the confusion an outmoded commitment to print culture and the argumentative logic it favors. To answer this unconscious tyranny of the word, both employ a non-linear discourse full of shifting, idiosyncratic terminology. And while much of McLuhan's vocabulary is outmoded, some of his dichotomies—between center and margin, or figure and ground—are still used by contemporary theorists.

MCLUHAN STANDS at the beginning of a rebirth of theory that continues today in the post-structuralist schools of deconstruction, reception theory, and new historicism. And it was his interest in theory as much as his prophetic tone that earned McLuhan ridicule. Our generation, convinced of the value of theory and of the danger of discriminating between major and minor works, forgets that such opinions were once heretical. The critical world into which McLuhan entered insisted on the purely aesthetic character of literature. Hierarchical and ahistorical, the New Criticism distinguished literary values from political ones, positing a poetic language divorced from the concerns of society, and a high literary tradition distinct from the culture of the masses.

To overturn this explicitly apolitical (implicitly conservative) criticism, McLuhan argued that modernism emphasized the visual over the written and that it was more interested in the process of literature than in the literary product itself. These modernist concerns, moreover, mirrored the technological shift from a culture communicating chiefly by print to one communicating largely through electronic devices. In so arguing, McLuhan not only narrowed the gap between science and literature, high and low culture. He also affirmed the importance of theory against a school of "close reading" that fancied itself eminently "practical." And he located the justification for the theoretical emphasis in the very authors felt to be the most purely aesthetic.

McLuhan's revision of then accepted truths drew the predictable response from the academic establishment. He was attacked for sloppy scholarship, illogical reasoning, lack of originality, and weak structure. His response was not to deny the accuracy of the charges, but to question whether such characteristics were necessarily flaws. McLuhan himself admitted the tentative nature of his conclusions. Consciously avoiding linear logic in favor of a more discursive "mosaic" method, he was interested less in proving than in "probing," offering tantalizing suggestions that might raise interesting questions despite their inaccuracy—even because of it. Rhetorical excesses were embraced not out of laziness, but out of the sense that clarity and concision might themselves be sources of error. Not finally caring whether television was essentially a hot medium or a cool one, he only wanted to see whether approaching the topic hyperbolically might uncover truths that a more cautious analytic language overlooked. In this manner, too, he anticipated the work of many current theorists, who avoid structured analysis in favor of a more discontinuous "playful" prose whose disorienting outrageousness is as much the point as any specific observations about particular texts.

YET WHILE his teacher William Empson and his colleague Northrop Frye are widely praised for their anticipation of modern theory, McLuhan himself is ignored by modern thinkers. The problem, one suspects, ultimately lies less in McLuhan's theory itself than in the political uses to which it has been put. Unlike Frye and Empson, who never pretended that their literary studies applied to the world at large, McLuhan was always after bigger cultural game, and his failure on this front is genuinely embarrassing. The letters suggest that however radical his literary theory, some of his opinions—on women, Jews, homosexuals, abortion—are quite conservative. In overturning the traditional assumptions of the literary establishment, he played



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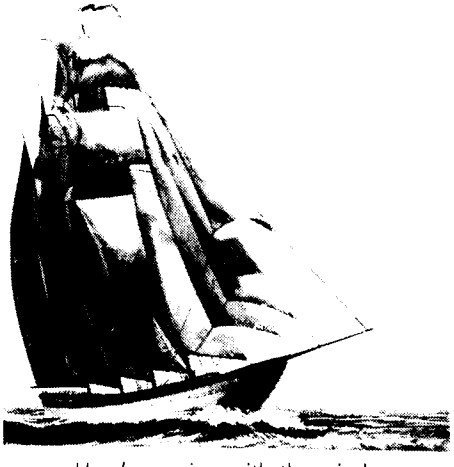

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into the more dangerously conservative hands of the business world, and in taking his case to the "people," he found himself increasingly allied with a power structure that exploited the masses as often as it protected them.

Nor was McLuhan, however famous he became, fully in control of his own public image. When Tom Wolfe first described the Canadian dynamo with the clip-on tie, McLuhan's combination of arrogance and innocence seemed proper in a moral crusader. Twenty years later it appears comic and sad. Never able to shed his professorial demeanor, McLuhan lectured businessman and politician alike, unaware that the businessmen were totally bemused or that a letter to Vice President Humphrey outlining the difference between "tribal" and "communist" would not end the war in Vietnam.

MOST IMPORTANT, McLuhan did not look critically enough at the reasons for his success. Attached as he was to the value of his project, he never considered that others' investment in his conclusions might be less altruistic. Repeatedly in the late letters McLuhan denied the implications that popular commentators like Dwight Macdonald drew from his work. To those who claimed his approach hastened the triumph of the philistines over the great tradition of literature, he insisted that he lacked a particular point of view and that he was personally attached to the print culture whose death he announced. Yet however heartfelt, these claims epitomize McLuhan's failure to realize that whatever his intention, he offered to industry a rationalization for a process of exploitation that he personally opposed. In lecturing on ways to use the media more effectively, he actively advanced the victory of electronic over written culture. Instead of introducing morality into advertising, his interpretations provided industrialists with fancy excuses for doing what they were already doing and more. If the medium was the real message, then one need not worry too much about the accuracy of one's advertising copy.

McLuhan is not the first theorist who unwittingly justified the very excesses he was trying to expose. The problem may be inherent in any theory that attempts to move outside the academy to address a wider audience. Ever since Emerson's theory of self-reliance was recast by the business community as laissez-faire economics, revolutionary theories have been too easily adapted to the marketplace, until *Vogue* is as conversant in semiology as is the Sorbonne. Perhaps the elevation of personality that attends celebrity necessarily results in a proportional devaluation of the ideas celebrated. To be lionized is to be domesticated; to be hailed as a radical in the Sunday *New York Times* is to forfeit one's status as revolutionary altogether. Nevertheless it is ironic that the man who showed why this assimilation occurs was unaware of its workings in his own case.

McLuhan was wrong not because in his pedantry he thought business would be humanized by references to Aquinas or Teilhard de Chardin. Or even because he did not see that he was unintentionally accelerating the changes he abhorred. He was wrong to think that commentary can ever be politically neutral, that theory can analyze a culture from the outside, without itself being part of and complicit in those cultural changes. Theory itself has a role in culture, and that role, as McLuhan should have taught us, is less a measure of the politics of its explicit content than of the cultural uses of the "medium" of theory itself. But our first scholar of media-displacement could never quite understand that he was himself a medium whose message was being displaced.

DAVID VAN LEER

David Van Leer teaches American literature and culture at the University of California, Davis.

DOMESTIC MUSE

Nora: The Real Life of Molly Bloom
by Brenda Maddox

(Houghton Mifflin, 476 pp., $19.95)

On the afternoon of June 10, 1904, James Joyce, walking along Nassau Street, Dublin, met a fine-looking girl and stopped to speak to her. She was Nora Barnacle, a chambermaid-cum-waitress at Finn's Hotel, Leinster Street, just off Nassau. They agreed to meet again on June 14, but Nora didn't turn up. Joyce wrote to her, and they met on the evening of June 16. They walked down to Ringsend, where Nora, taking the sexual initiative, masturbated him. Nora soon decided that she was in love with Joyce, and he, with nearly equal speed, that he wanted to run away with her. On the night of October 8, 1904, each separately and as if independently boarded ship at the North Wall, bound for Liverpool. There they took a train to London and set off for Paris en route to Zurich, where Joyce was supposed to have a job teaching in a Berlitz school. There was no job, but he learned there might be one in Trieste and, when Trieste failed, he landed one in Pola.

Brenda Maddox's *Nora* is not the first biography of Nora Barnacle. Padraic O'Laoi's *Nora Barnacle Joyce: A Portrait* gives the domestic facts and concentrates on Nora's early years in Galway. More briefly, it sketches her later years without brooding much upon the considerations that prompted her to entangle her life with Joyce's. Maddox's book is immensely detailed, and unintimidated by the consideration that Nora would never have been heard of if she hadn't been bold enough to talk to a stranger that day on Nassau Street.

Nora Barnacle was born in Galway on March 21, 1884—not 1886, as the revised edition of Richard Ellmann's *James Joyce* has it. Her father, Thomas Barnacle, was a journeyman baker, illiterate—he signed the marriage register with an "X"—and a persistent drinker. Her mother, formerly Annie Healy, came from a slightly higher social class, but the experience of having eight children put an end to any ambitions she may have had. To ease the burden, Nora lived with her grandmother, Kate Healy. When she was five, Nora was enrolled in the Convent of Mercy School at Newtownsmyth and stayed a pupil there till she was 13 and her formal schooling ended. She then became a portress at the Presentation Convent. When her grandmother died in 1897, Nora passed into the care of her uncle Thomas Healy and lived in his house on

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Augustine Street till she left for Dublin in 1904.

IT IS CLEAR that Nora was a spirited girl with an eye for boys. Her first love was Michael Bodkin, who was a student at University College, Galway, until he got a job as a clerk at the local gas company. He died of tuberculosis on February 11, 1900, and was buried at Rahoon. The climax of Joyce's story "The Dead" is based on this episode. Some time after Bodkin's death, Nora started walking out with Willy Mulvagh, a clerk in Joe Young's Mineral Water Company. He was the son of a sergeant in the Royal Irish Constabulary and, a more dreadful consideration, a Protestant. Uncle Tommy objected to him as an unsuitable associate for Nora and at least once thrashed her for keeping company with him. It was probably this situation that determined Nora, early in 1904, to light out for Dublin.

A job in Finn's Hotel gave Nora independence, privacy, and the gratification of turning down sexual invitations. She was a simple girl, but forceful and lively. The folly of eloping with a penniless writer seems not to have struck her: she was charmed by Joyce's face, voice, and bearing. But the domestic conditions in Pola and in Trieste were drab. Joyce was drinking, leaning on his brother Stanislaus for money, trying to write, and failing to be published. Their first child, Giorgio, was born on July 27, 1905, their second, Lucia, on July 26, 1907. In 1908 Nora had a miscarriage.

The subtitle of Maddox's book prejudices a genuine issue in Nora Barnacle's favor. She makes grandiose claims for Nora's presence in Joyce's work, not only in "The Dead" and *Exiles*, where it is incontestable, but in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, where she is present along with so much besides that a milder claim would be appropriate:

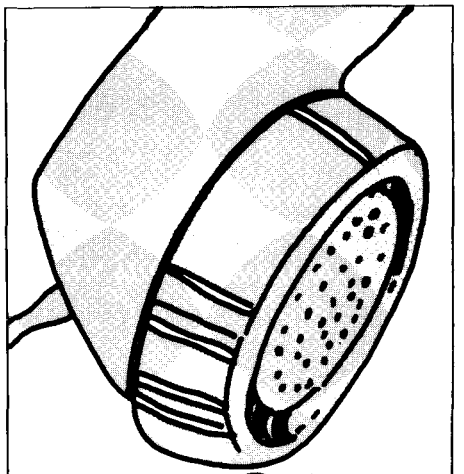
> Nora can be seen in all the main characters in Joyce, from Lily the serving girl in *Dubliners* to Anna Livia Plurabelle in *Finnegans Wake*. She even appears, through the meaning of her surname, in *A Portrait*, the only one among Joyce's books with which she is not usually associated. In *A Portrait* Stephen Dedalus finds his muse in a beautiful girl wading on the beach "whom magic had changed into the likeness of a strange and beautiful seabird." Even in *Ulysses* traces of Nora can be found in characters other than Molly Bloom; Joyce worked Nora's aggressive derision, which he so enjoyed, into the character of Bella Cohen, the brothelkeeper.

The problem is that the more "traces of Nora" one finds, the more trivial each of them becomes. When Maddox, comparing Nora with Molly Bloom, reports that "both women hated umbrellas and liked roast chicken, read pornography and believed in God," it's difficult to know what to do with these congruences; they are at once interesting and boring. A more serious consideration then arises: impelled to this scavenging, Maddox sometimes gives the misleading impression that Joyce had only to transcribe quotidian detail, he didn't need to imagine anything.

IT HAS long been recognized that Nora was important to Joyce not only as his wife and mother to their children but as a figure provocatively different from himself. In 1904 he made her his muse of transcendence, his Shelleyan bird of freedom and transfiguration, but she was never taken in by his poetics. She knew herself, her powers and their limits. Besides, she could get him to do anything, short of paying the rent regularly and staying sober.

The most telling episode in their lives, and the most inspiring for his work, happened in the summer of 1909, when Joyce was in Dublin trying to get *Dubliners* published. On August 6, Vincent Cosgrave, an old university crony, told him that he had enjoyed Nora's favors in the summer of 1904 while she was apparently Joyce's beloved. Joyce was shattered and wrote to Nora immediately—"I can see nothing but your face as it was then raised to meet another's"—begging her to deny the charge and release him from his misery. After a few days, a better friend, J. F. Byrne, assured Joyce that Cosgrave's claim was "a blasted lie"; the truth was, he said, that Nora had rejected Cosgrave's advances. Stanislaus confirmed Byrne's assurance, and soon Joyce was convinced that the lie had been concocted between Cosgrave and Joyce's false friend Oliver St. John Gogarty. Many years later Byrne said that Nora had given herself to Cosgrave before she had met Joyce, and that it was Cosgrave who had introduced Joyce to Nora—which casts some doubt on the Nassau Street encounter.

When Joyce wrote his desolate letters to Nora, beginning on August 6, 1909, Nora showed them to Stanislaus and let Joyce cool his heels for a while. Within two weeks he was effusively apologizing for having doubted her, but insisting that "your love for me must be fierce



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and violent to make me forget *utterly*." Nora knew what he wanted and wrote him an obscene letter. It is clear that she wanted him to masturbate and to keep away from Dublin whores. For about three months, their correspondence drove Joyce into ecstasies of fantasy. Nora's letters haven't survived, but their character is clear enough from his replies—elaborate bouts of anal, excrementitious, and masochistic imagining.

The episode had many consequences. Nora discovered that, to make Joyce take note of his responsibilities, she should threaten to leave him and take the children; then he would borrow money for the rent, lavish gifts and tenderness on her, and behave himself for a while. Meanwhile Joyce, having disposed of Cosgrave, let his mind hover upon triangular sexual situations—with sickly and disgusting curiosity, as in *Exiles*; with strange generosity in *Ulysses*.

In an essay on Joyce's letters to Nora, Lionel Trilling took the obscene letters as evidence of "the controlling tendency of Joyce's genius—to move through the fullest realization of the human, the all-too-human, to that which transcends and denies the human." The risks involved in that endeavor are appallingly clear in *Exiles*, where Joyce's Richard Rowan keeps tormenting his wife as if he were a demented confessor and she his victim. One of Joyce's notes for *Exiles* reads:

> The bodily possession of Bertha by Robert, repeated often, would certainly bring into almost carnal contact the two men. Do they desire this? To be united, that is carnally through the person and body of Bertha as they cannot, without dissatisfaction and degradation—be united carnally man to man as man to woman? . . . Richard, unfitted for adulterous intercourse with the wives of his friends because it would involve a great deal of pretence on his part rather than because he is convinced of any dishonourableness in it, wishes, it seems, to feel the thrill of adultery vicariously and to possess a bound woman Bertha through the organ of his friend.

The note was written in November 1913. The play itself is three acts of masturbation provoked by imaginary piquancies of betrayal and shame. Vicarious thrills meant much to Joyce. Starting with the ordinary pleasure of seeing his handsome wife admired by other men, he proceeded to more occult satisfactions, encouraging Nora—at least for a while—to receive the attentions of his friend Roberto Prezioso. Nora was pleased by these entertainments, but she never went to bed with Prezioso nor, later, with Ottocaro Weiss, who was probably in love with her. Occasionally, she wearied of Joyce's vicariousness. "Jim wants me to go with other men," she complained to Frank Budgen, "so that he will have something to write about."

SHE HAD a point. Joyce was not very good at making up stories. He could imagine an enormous amount of circumambient detail, but he needed an incident to start it. Vicarious betrayal and cuckoldry kept him going, especially during the years between *Exiles* and *Ulysses*. The difference between the two works is that in the play he keeps his own morbid affections dangerously close to Richard's; in *Ulysses*, by assigning these feelings to Leopold and Molly Bloom rather than to Stephen Dedalus, he distances himself from them. When Bloom thinks of introducing Stephen to Molly, and Molly thinks of having nice young Stephen around the house, these motifs are free of the scratchiness of *Exiles*. Bloom wants Stephen to displace Blazes Boylan, and Molly would quite like a new interest.

It seems clear enough that during these early-middle years the sexual life of Joyce and Nora came to a quiet end. Joyce added to the list of girls with whom he fancied himself entranced: Amalia Popper, Anny Schleimer, Gertrude Kaempffer, Marthe Fleischmann. Nothing much more than brief stimulation came from these visions. Besides, when Joyce started being patronized by Harriet Shaw Weaver and, more tenuously, by Edith McCormick, he and Nora spent more time living high, at the opera, in restaurants, cutting an international dash.

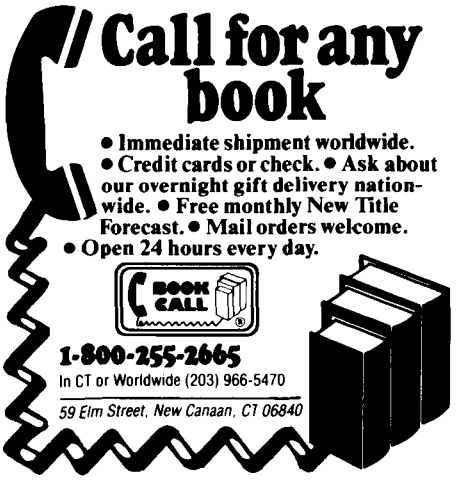
Nora was exasperated by her husband's grandeurs, his absurdly lavish tipping in restaurants, his inevitable drunkenness. But on the whole she managed him fairly well. Her conditions weren't too bad till Giorgio, an unsuccessful singer, declined into the idleness of having an affair with Helen Fleischman, and Lucia began acting more and more bizarre. There were occasions, as in May 1932, when Nora decided she couldn't take anymore, that she must leave; but Joyce always persuaded her to stay. He was so clearly far more interested in her than in anyone else, including their children: in a letter to Ms. Weaver he referred to "my wife who personally is probably worth both of her children rolled together and multiplied by three."

ON THE penultimate page of *Finnegans Wake*, Anna Livia says:

> Anyway let her rain for my time is come. I done me best when I was let. Thinking always if I go all goes. A hundred cares, a tithe of troubles and is there one who understands me?.

This is the question Joyce asked Nora in Dublin 34 years before *Finnegans Wake*. The sentences preceding it may be taken as Nora's claim, entirely merited, for her life. She is, if not everything in Joyce's work, as Maddox suggests, at least never very far from it. She never read *Ulysses*, though she learned enough about it to say that Molly Bloom, a fat married woman, was not Nora Barnacle. She liked Joyce's early love poems, read "The Dead," and somehow got the notion that *Finnegans Wake*, not *Ulysses*, is the great book. She can hardly have read the *Wake*, but Joyce may have murmured some of its more accessible passages to her without troubling her mind about its meaning. Besides, she always thought he should have been a professional singer instead of a writer.

Joyce and Nora were married in Lon-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don, for elaborate legal reasons, on July 4, 1931. Their lives thereafter were preoccupied with parental distresses, money, Joyce's worsening eyes, *Finnegans Wake*, and the impending war, the last a matter on which Joyce expressed little more than irritation ("Give him Europe!" he said to Padraic Colum when Neville Chamberlain was trying to discourage Hitler from seizing it). In December 1940 the Joyces went to neutral Zurich, and Joyce died there on January 13, 1941. Nora survived him by ten years; she died there of uremic poisoning on April 10, 1951. Giorgio died in 1972, and Lucia in 1982.

Now that Ellmann's apparently definitive biography of Joyce has been published in its final form, it is not a surprise that a biographer should turn her attention to Nora Barnacle, the crucial presence in Joyce's life. Anne Saddlemyer, with perhaps similar intent, is at work on a biography of George Yeats, the poet's wife. The aim of such books, I assume, is to step aside from the official terms of reference—art, imagination, form, language—and to see chiefly the domestic forces that ministered to them. It is to address life as if its major concern were not art or knowledge but the dailiness of survival.

There may even be a desire to see the high anxieties of Modernism chastened by juxtaposition with the more immediate if lower anxieties of money, drink, sex, bewilderment, and muddle. To think of Nora Barnacle's life is to think of mere conditions and not of the genius that somehow transcended them or at least made a virtue out of their necessity. Nora was Joyce's life so far as it was compelled to be earthbound, tormented and tormenting. What she had of life apart from Joyce's life, it is hardly possible to say and may not be worth saying. She was not a fool, but we might think she was if we too assiduously undertook to read her mind.

One of the many merits of Brenda Maddox's book is that she knows Nora Barnacle's limits and observes them. I don't find Nora quite as omnipresent as Maddox does, but that is of little account. Henry James speaks of the strong effect that resides in simplicity and yet that is so far from merely consisting of it. The effect of Nora's simplicity is strong in that sense, yet doesn't merely consist of it. One of the graces of Maddox's biography is that it allows us to think of Nora in such terms.

DENIS DONOGHUE

Denis Donoghue's *England, Their England: Commentaries on British Writers and Writing* will be published this fall by Knopf.

WHO KILLED KIROV?

The Kirov Affair
by Adam Ulam

(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 440 pp., $19.95)

When Serge Mironovich Kirov was killed in his Leningrad office on December 1, 1934, he was the second most important man in the Soviet Union. He was thought to be a "liberal" of sorts, more popular than Stalin, who even then, before the beginning of the great terror, was more feared than loved. Kirov had been sent in the 1920s to head the Leningrad Party branch considered to be a hotbed of the opposition to Stalin. He served there effectively and loyally. Kirov seems to have been genuinely devoid of ambition, and Stalin certainly had nothing to fear from him. This has led some Western historians to conclude that Stalin could not possibly have had a hand in the assassination: What could have been the motive behind killing an ally?

In an earlier book Adam Ulam subscribed to more or less this view. A case can indeed be made that the murder was conceived and executed singlehandedly by a disgruntled or demented man, Leonid Nikolayev, a former minor Party functionary. There have been, after all, similar such cases: the burning of the Reichstag in February 1933 was carried out by the Dutchman Marinus van der Lubbe, without outside help, and the murder of President Kennedy also comes to mind. In both cases, conspiracy theories abounded and were only reluctantly ruled out: the evidence, weighed over many years, has lent increasing support to the consensus that a lone murderer was responsible.

BUT IN THE case of the Kirov assassination, there are too many strange circumstances. It is just not possible that his ever present bodyguard was not where he should have been at the decisive moment. And how to explain that the same bodyguard was killed a few hours later in a traffic accident? There were other coincidences that stretch credulity too far. As for the search for Stalin's possible motive, it's not likely to lead to any conclusive truth: in subsequent years Stalin had a great many people killed who were his allies or fervent supporters. In fact, Kirov would probably have been killed two or three years later on Stalin's orders in any case.

This has been the view of some historians all along, and in Anatoli Rybakov's recent novel, *Children of the Arbat*, Stalin's guilt is strongly suggested. More telling, Khrushchev said in his secret speech in 1956 that after the murder of Kirov, top functionaries of the NKVD (the forerunner of the KGB) were given very light sentences, but in 1937 they were shot. His conclusion: "We can assume they were shot in order to cover the traces of the organizers of Kirov's killings." Khrushchev may have been wrong, but he certainly had access to more facts than any historian in either the West or the East.

It is just possible that the murder was the work of a single individual who had no accomplices. But most historians now believe that at least the lower echelons of the Leningrad secret police were involved to some degree. This view leads us into deep waters. The secret police were not known for independence of thought or action at any level. If they knew, Stalin knew, and if he knew, he had his hand in this murky affair. If there were documents such as written orders, which is not certain, they have been destroyed. For this reason it is quite possible that the full truth will never be established. The evidence points to Stalin's involvement, but on the basis of the proof currently available, a court of law would probably

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reach the old Scottish verdict of "not proven."

THE KIROV MURDER is the starting point for Ulam's novel. Michael Kondratiev, the hero of the story, an imaginary Politburo member during the 1960s and '70s, was accidentally present when Kirov committed suicide, or to be precise, was driven to suicide by Stalin. Ulam, a distinguished historian of 19th- and 20th-century Russia and of the Soviet Union, knows about as much as anyone in the West on the topic and the subsequent events. His new book can be read as an "entertainment" (to borrow Graham Greene's term). It expresses frustration with the limits of straightforward historical writing in which the spirit of certain events and trends quite often cannot be adequately rendered even if there is an abundance of sources. Recent Soviet history belongs to this category, and no amount of footnotes referring to articles in *Pravda* will remedy this state of affairs.

Marx was right when he wrote that Balzac is of greater help in understanding the zeitgeist of the 1830s and '40s in France than all the historians. It was common in the last century for historians to write novels (or poems or plays) and vice versa. In our age the writing of fiction is thought to be behavior unbecoming in serious scholars. "Academic," unfortunately, is all too often a synonym for highly specialized, dry, devoid of imagination—and too many works in history and political science have lived up to the reputation, becoming less readable without becoming more scientific.

I am not certain that *The Kirov Affair* is a masterpiece in the field of political fiction, a notoriously difficult genre. Nor will it be awarded the Crime Writers Association's Gold Dagger for 1988. But this witty and informed novel is certainly miles ahead of the *Gorky Park* school of writing. And for its background authenticity, it may well be preferable to some of the textbooks that are now required reading in the field. It will certainly speak to a public that would not ordinarily immerse itself in learned treatises on the dynamics of Soviet decision-making.

WALTER LAQUEUR

Walter Laqueur is the author of a forthcoming study of *glasnost* to be published by Macmillan-Scribner.

TRB, *from page 4*

sky has a silver lining? Not exactly. The $5 billion government savings works out to about $20 per citizen. A two percent increase in the price of food will cost about $24 per citizen.

Anyway, farmers are not about to let the government keep its $5 billion savings. The government has already paid them billions in anticipation of having to buy up their bumper harvests at an artificially high price. Now they have no bumper harvests, and what they do have can be sold for even more on the open market, but they want to be excused from giving the money back. They also want their normal "deficiency" payments, intended to make up for low prices, even though prices are no longer low. There is substantial support in Congress for both these ideas.

In the current *Time* magazine, as part of a tearjerker cover story on the drought, there's a photograph of a farmer gazing sadly at a cow that lies collapsed on the dry, bare earth as the merciless sun beats down. The mournful caption: "There is nothing Manuel Benavides can do for this dying cow on his parched farm." Before you feel too sorry for this farmer (the cow is another matter), you might wish to recall that just last year the government—at the farmers' own insistence—was paying them to kill their cows in order to reduce surplus milk production caused by dairy price supports.

"Our country decided long ago that wages should not be determined solely by the marketplace," says Senator Harkin. He argues that government farm programs are nothing but "a minimum wage for farmers." In that case, I have an alternative. The current minimum wage is $3.35. The wildest-eyed liberal Democrats want to raise it to five dollars, which would be about $10,000 a year. You could pay every farmer in the country $10,000 and it would cost less than farm programs cost the government last year.

Therefore, my proposal: end all farm subsidies. Instead, offer every farmer the minimum wage for life. All he'd have to do in exchange is: (1) turn over all his farming assets to the government for sale to the highest bidder willing to operate without further government subsidy; (2) get out of farming, if it's making him so miserable; (3) stop whining.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

person of a different race. For a unanimous court, Chief Justice Burger wrote:

> The question . . . is whether the reality of private biases and the possible injury they might inflict are permissible considerations for removal of an infant child from the custody of its natural mother. We have little difficulty concluding that they are not. The Constitution cannot control such prejudices but neither can it tolerate them. Private biases may be outside the reach of the law, but the law cannot, directly or indirectly, give them effect. "Public officials sworn to uphold the Constitution may not avoid a constitutional duty by bowing to the hypothetical effects of private . . . prejudice that they assume to be both widely and deeply held" [Palmer v. Thompson, 1971].

Palmore stands for the proposition that the Constitution protects the rights of natural parents to custody of their children notwithstanding the fact that their lifestyles may engender prejudicial reactions. As a matter of public policy, the same principles ought to protect the rights of gay persons to be treated equally in foster case placements.

WILLIAM B. RUBENSTEIN
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation
New York, New York

HAZARD DETAIL

To the editors:

I strongly object to Robert Bazell's characterization of the cleanup workers at Chernobyl as mostly volunteers "attracted by double pay" and other benefits ("Red Forest," May 30). At the beginning of the cleanup operations, a large number of military reservists were forcibly sent to Chernobyl from Estonia. The official Estonian Komsomol newspaper *Noorte Haal* reported in August 1986 that men had been taken from their workplaces, sometimes at night. It went on to describe the almost intolerable living conditions at the work sites and the great fears expressed by the workers about the long-term physical harm they would suffer due to the inadequate radiation protection equipment provided. Although conditions at Chernobyl have undoubtedly improved, it's wrong to forget those workers who had more on their mind than the "admission of their children to the right summer camps . . . that might lead to upward mobility."

JUTA RISTSOO
New York, New York

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LONDON DIARIST

Yobs and Snobs

I WAS IN ENGLAND when my fellow Brits—they of the shaved heads and dirty T-shirts—reinvaded Europe, under the pretext of being interested in soccer. After the usual wreckage, utterly appalled government officials made utterly appalled statements. Mrs. Thatcher, unctuous as ever, apologized to Helmut Kohl at the Toronto summit. The sports minister, Colin Moynihan, whose authority is only marginally undermined by the fact that he stands a few inches below Mrs. Thatcher and can't pronounce his R's, vowed darkly to "cwack down on these wuffians." Still, it didn't take much time for me to work out whose side I was on. Maybe it was the interview on BBC radio with a yob deported back to London who pledged, Dunkirk-like, to make it back to Stuttgart with or without his confiscated passport. Or perhaps it was just the sight of various helpless members of the British lumpenbourgeoisie—their grinning heads twisted around the elbows of unsmiling German police, their sunburned backs careering clumsily through Stuttgart shop windows—that finally brought me round. But the clincher was patriotic pride. The emergence of yobs wealthy enough to pay for a week off work in Germany is the clearest sign yet of a genuine national revival in Britain. Not since Agincourt has a rising middle class been cocky enough to punch its way to the top. After decades of "Masterpiece Theater" decline, deferent workers cheering dim royals, and legions of garden fetishists whose idea of fun was a gentle discussion of acidity levels in the topsoil, the class system is finally getting shaken up. There are happier consequences of this than violence, of course, but the hooligan revival is at least a reminder that there's now no shortage of Britons successful enough to deserve beating up and plenty of others self-confident enough to do it.

MY FIRST REAL encounter with a yob was at the age of 13 on the cross-Channel ferry. My high school was organizing what was referred to as a "cultural exchange." This meant sending 30 adolescent boys to Calais, where they would attempt to get drunk enough to be able to vomit on French tourists on the way back. My own cultural exchange was of a different sort: I met someone from the North of England. Sitting in a seat already claimed by a gang of school kids from somewhere outside London, I made the fatal mistake of staying put when they returned. Perhaps the best way to describe what happened next is to recount what passed for the conversation.

NORTHERN YOB: (threateningly) What team do you support?
SOUTHERN WIMP: (nimbly) What team do *you* support?
(Pause.)
NORTHERN YOB: Nay, nay. We're not telling yer that.
SOUTHERN WIMP: Well, where do you come from?
NORTHERN YOB: Wigan.
SOUTHERN WIMP: (pathetically) Oh, that's nice.
(Pause.)
NORTHERN YOB: (more threateningly) So what team do you support?
SOUTHERN WIMP: (raiding his limited knowledge of English soccer teams) I support Wigan United.
NORTHERN YOB: (incomprehensibly) Nay, it's not that. It's Wigan Athletic.
SOUTHERN WIMP: Pardon?
NORTHERN YOB: (more incomprehensibly) Doon't say "pardon?" say "eh?"
SOUTHERN WIMP: (try again) Pardon?
NORTHERN YOB: Ah said, doon't say "pardon?" say "eh?"
SOUTHERN WIMP: (last try) Pardon?

The next thing I knew, I got hit.

MORE RECENT developments, though, suggest that the result of the class war is still in doubt. A new book called *Eton Voices* is selling well in London. It's written by individuals whose only distinction is having been educated at Britain's most exclusive public (i.e., private) school. The essays have all the studied charm of the old Andy Warhol *Interview*, except that instead of discussing the merits of various hairdressers, the writers tend to gravitate toward the subject of horses. My favorite entry was that of Nicholas Coleridge, editor of *Harper's and Queen*, a society magazine for English preppies. In a rare moment of honesty, Coleridge muses of his fellow Etonians, "I'm bound to say that if I meet someone that I have never met before, say if I'm traveling abroad, or through work or something, and it emerges that they were *there*, I feel an interest in them that is multiplied by at least ten. There are certain people who weren't there and I do admit that in some strange way, I think, 'Now, why weren't they?' And I know in some awful way that it counts against them slightly. If we are being completely candid, I do accept that I prefer the company of Etonians to the company of people from other public schools." Anyone for skinheads?

THE OBITUARIES editor of the *Times* of London, T. E. Utley, died last week. His last request—that his own obituary be headed "HOIST WITH HIS OWN PETARD"—was unfortunately ignored. I mention him simply because he was one of the most remarkable men I have ever known. An editorial writer for the *Times* in his 20s, author of several works of conservative philosophy, deputy editor of the *Daily Telegraph* for many years, and speechwriter for Margaret Thatcher in the late 1970s and '80s, he was a chief architect of the Thatcher revolution and lately one of its more intelligent critics. Less well known, though, is the fact that he did all this blind from his early teens. His disability didn't soften his Tory bleakness—he was deeply and funnily pessimistic about almost everything—but coupled it with a sensitivity to human frailty without which no conservatism is morally defensible. He gave me, along with many others, my start in journalism. Dictating his daily editorial, he would pace his office until he walked either into the door or the window, cursing softly as he did so, leaving a line of ashes on the wall from the cigarette he held as he wandered. He saw the world in paragraphs, able to construct arguments literally out of darkness, devoting himself to a cerebral asceticism alleviated only by massive quantities of Scotch and water. I remember once asking him, in a sudden moment of exasperation, what exactly he believed in. He replied, as only a High Tory could, "My dear boy, I don't think I believe in anything." He was buried in the Church of England, an institution he loved, and one that once stood for that English blend of skepticism and dignity that used to keep yobs and snobs in more peaceful, if less colorful, coexistence.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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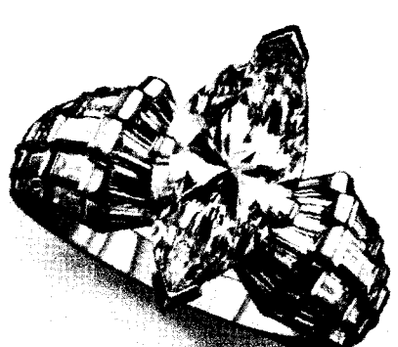

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